

Warheads may be in sunken Iraqi boats

AMSTERDAM (R) — Chemical weapons and military equipment may be on the seabed and in Iraqi boats sunk in the Gulf during the 1991 war over Kuwait, a Dutch salvage firm said on Saturday. "There are a large number of wrecks in the area and they are probably surrounded by chemical weapons and ordnance," Laura Keestra, spokeswoman for the salvage firm Wismuller, told Reuters. "There are probably warheads on board some of the vessels, although we cannot be very sure of this yet." Wismuller, assigned by the International Maritime Organisation to inspect sunken marine obstacles, carried out preliminary investigations in the area and was given permission by the United Nations to salvage 20 vessels, Ms. Keestra said. "What we know is that there are some tug boats, some barges and a number of crude oil tankers down there," Ms. Keestra said. A Kuwaiti environmental group said earlier that Wismuller had found canisters which might contain chemical products in the area where the vessels were sunk. The wrecks lie in Iraqi and international waters.

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Lives of 4 million Iraqis are at risk, U.N. report warns

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The lives of almost one in four people in sanctions-hit Iraq are at risk and the health care situation has turned into a "nightmare," a U.N. report released on Saturday said.

It also said that between 20 and 29 per cent of children under the age of five, depending on where they live, were malnourished.

Since April, "the humanitarian situation deteriorated further in all sectors, particularly in the areas of nutrition and health," said the report, distributed at a coordination centre for relief work in Iraq.

"Living conditions remain precarious for at least four million persons," out of a population of 18.5 million, the United Nations said.

"Iraq's health care is a nightmare, public health services are nearing a total breakdown as basic medicines, life-saving drugs and essential medical supplies are lacking throughout the country," it said.

"Health centres have become unhygienic places as most basic antiseptics supplies, spare bed sheets and

the like are in acute shortage," the report warned.

Government food rations cover "only about 60 per cent of the daily energy needs" of people in central and southern Iraq.

"In the absence of sufficient pledges and on account of bottlenecks at the border crossing, WFP (World Food Programme) food distributions were drastically reduced," it said.

The United Nations, which said in June it received only \$12 million from the \$183 million it needed, has delivered food to between a third and a half of the one million people in need in Kurdish-held northern Iraq.

Food and medicine are exempted from the U.N. embargo in force since Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

But Iraq says it does not have the resources and rejects a U.N. proposal for limited oil sales under international supervision on the grounds it would infringe on national sovereignty.

Referendum invitations

Iraq has invited U.S.

House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich and other politicians from around the world to observe a referendum on renewing President Saddam Hussein's mandate.

Mr. Gingrich is among 300 politicians from all nations except Kuwait and Israel invited to watch the Oct. 15 referendum. Mohammad Muzaffar Al Adhami, vice chairman of parliament's foreign affairs committee, said Saturday.

Mr. Adhami told Baghdad newspapers: "Among those invited are the speakers of the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as speakers of the World Parliamentary Union, the EU, and the Arab and African parliamentary unions."

It was unclear whether he was also referring to Bob Dole, the Senate majority leader, or Vice President Al Gore, who chairs the Senate.

Ghanem Aziz Khadduri, deputy speaker of the Iraqi parliament, said the referendum could not be organised in Iraqi Kurdistan, which has been controlled by Kurdish

(Continued on page 7)



His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday holds talks with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker during a visit he paid to the Prime Ministry on Saturday. The King issued directives to Sharif Zeid on several domestic and regional issues, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

King leaves for France today en route to U.S.

HM to address Europarlament in Strasbourg, discuss ties and MENA summit in Washington

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein leaves for France today en route to the United States where he is expected to meet with U.S. President Bill Clinton, congressional leaders and World Bank officials and attend the expected signing of an expanded self-rule agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel, informed sources said.

While in France, the King will address the European Parliament in Strasbourg, they said.

In the U.S., the King will discuss with President Clin-

ton and congressional leaders Jordanian-American relations, the Middle East peace process and the latest developments in the region.

It will be the first meeting between the King and Mr. Clinton after the Monarch decided to grant asylum to two senior Iraqi defectors in August and the U.S. president threw his weight behind the move by pledging to defend the Kingdom against any Iraqi military threat.

Also expected to figure high in the King's talks in Washington are issues related to the Oct. 29-31 Middle East and North Africa MENA economic summit to be held in Amman. The Clinton administration has launched

a strong campaign among U.S. business leaders to attend the summit and look seriously at investment opportunities that have emerged in Jordan and in the region after the Kingdom signed a peace treaty with Israel in October 1994.

The MENA summit and projects to be presented to the government and business leaders attending the conference are also expected to be discussed by the King and World Bank officials. The talks will also cover Jordan's economic performance and World Bank support for the Kingdom's economic restructuring programme under the guidance of the International

(Continued on page 7)

Hamas arms cache found in Gaza

GAZA CITY (AFP) — A large amount of weapons and explosives belonging to the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) have been found in an apartment used as a bomb-building factory, Palestinian police said Saturday. The cache was discovered on Sept. 13 after a Palestinian militant was killed while preparing a bomb in his apartment in the Gaza Strip. A woman was also slightly injured. Police discovered a hidden room that contained three belts of explosives ready to use, rocket-propelled grenades, three sacks of TNT, automatic weapons, pistols and thousands of bullets. On April 2, four Hamas militants, including a leader of the group, were killed while working on a bomb in an apartment in the Gaza Strip where they were making explosives. An infant was also killed in the explosion. Hamas has claimed most of the suicide bomb attacks over the last year and half, which have killed dozens of Israelis.

Kabariti, Sabah to meet again at U.N.

Foreign minister: Jordan not at fault for cool ties with Syria

AMMAN (R) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said Saturday he would meet his Kuwaiti counterpart in New York soon in another step to restore ties harmed by the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

"We agreed to continue our dialogue and meetings and there will be one in New York on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly," meetings, Mr. Kabariti told Reuters.

Mr. Kabariti met Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah in Cairo on Wednesday during an Arab League meeting. It was the first reported high-level contact since ties were damaged by Jordan's sympathy for Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

The meeting comes amid signs Jordan's ties with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait might improve faster than previously expected.

Arab diplomats said a recent Saudi-Jordanian rapprochement, Jordan's decision to grant sanctuary to top-level Iraqi defectors and King Hussein's subsequent criticism of Iraq, had helped.

Diplomats say Mr. Kabariti and Sheikh Sabah had

recently telephoned each other several times and established good rapport.

But they said a largely anti-Jordanian popular mood in Kuwait was complicating the government's efforts to speed up reconciliation with Jordan.

Amman's ties with other Gulf states are almost back to normal.

"We expect some sort of a Kuwaiti initiative on Jordan in the next few weeks because the Kuwaiti government believes in resuming ties with Jordan," one Arab diplomat said.

Jordan has been pressing Kuwait to allow it to reopen its mission in Kuwait, closed during the crisis, and to allow its national carrier to resume flights to Kuwait after a five-year break.

The Kuwaiti embassy in Amman has been run by a charge d'affaires since it withdrew its ambassador five years ago. The Jordanian embassy in Kuwait remains closed.

Over 300,000 Jordanians, many of Palestinian origin, were forced to leave Kuwait because of the crisis.

Mr. Kabariti said Saudi

(Continued on page 7)

Serbs retake part of lost territory

Sarajevo reports discovery of mass grave of Muslims

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Counter-attacks by Bosnian Serb troops may have wrested back some lost territory from Muslim and Croat forces in northwest Bosnia, U.N. peacekeepers said on Saturday.

They confirmed Serb claims to have retained control of the towns of Mrkonjic Grad and Sanski Most which straddle important roads in the region around the Serb stronghold of Banja Luka.

The Serbs appear to have halted a joint Muslim-Croat offensive which captured hundreds of square kilometres of western Bosnia this month and forced up to 120,000 Serb civilians to flee to Banja Luka.

U.N. spokesman Chris Vernon said: "Our assessment is that the confrontation line remains stable but we believe the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) are mounting limited counter attacks at the major population points along the line."

The BSA command claimed that Croat troops were pushed back at Sanski Most and Bosanski Novi on Friday and that Muslim forces were repulsed south-west of Sanski Most.

The Bosnian Serb government said after a meeting in Banja Luka that the front lines had stabilised and that some refugees were returning to their homes.

Radovan Karadzic, "president" of the self-proclaimed

Bosnian Serb republic denied that any deal had been done with Muslims and Croats to exchange territory in the northwest.

"There is word among the people about some maps of territorial divisions," he told Serb media. "All these stories are lies and no maps have been drawn."

Rumours of a deal, widespread among the refugees, have been blamed for the poor performance of Bosnian Serb troops against the Muslim-Croat offensive.

Soldiers of the BSA's 2nd Krajina Corps, suspecting that their political leaders were trading their land as part of a territorial swap envisaged by a peace settlement, joined their families in the flight to Banja Luka.

Zagreb, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic said Bosnian forces had found a three-year-old mass grave containing 540 bodies in territory recaptured a week ago from the Bosnian Serbs.

"Serb terrorists killed the Bosnians of the town of Kljuc and buried them in a mass grave — that is genocide," he said in an interview with Reuters. Mr. Silajdzic, speaking on a visit to the Croatian capital Zagreb, said the grave was found on Thursday at Krasulje, a village 10 kilometres from Kljuc in northwest Bosnia. The killing had probably taken place in the summer of 1992.

(Continued on page 7)

Israel, PLO resume talks, on verge of agreement

TABA (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), saying they were on the verge of an agreement on expanding Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank, resumed marathon talks on Saturday.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat went into a meeting in the Egyptian Taba resort which both sides said could lead to an accord within several hours.

Hundreds of Palestinians clashed with Israeli troops in the still-occupied West bank city of Hebron, just hours before the Taba meeting.

Palestinian sources said protesters took to the streets after Israeli soldiers shot and wounded Abdul Fatah Abu Mayaleh, 50, at a roadblock in Hebron.

They said troops used tear-gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters.

In Taba, Mr. Peres was upbeat, saying most of the difficult issues had been resolved and that an accord could be initiated by Saturday evening, the eve of the Jewish new year.

"I know that for a large portion of the people there will be very big news for the new year if we will be wise enough to take tonight a very large step towards the peace," Mr. Peres told Israeli army radio.

But Palestinian negotiators insisted that Israel first commit itself to a timetable for releasing thousands of Palestinian security de-

tainees. "We are not going to sign before we resolve the issue of the prisoners," Palestinian Justice Minister Freih Abu Meidein said after Saturday's Palestinian cabinet meeting.

Mr. Peres and Mr. Arafat have already met for more than 60 hours this week, negotiating the extent of Israeli troop withdrawal in the West Bank and the terms for Palestinian general elections.

Under the emerging agreement, Israeli troops would pull out of six West Bank towns over the next few weeks.

A partial withdrawal from the seventh town, Hebron, will follow once Israel has built a bypass road for the 450 Jewish settlers living in the town of 120,000 Palestinians. Israeli officials have said the construction of the road would take six months.

Israel TV said Friday that Mr. Arafat had decided to hold general elections only in March, once the troop redeployment in Hebron is completed. Palestinian officials initially said they wanted to hold elections by the end of the year.

In the balloting, the Palestinians will choose 82 members of a governing council.

In the six towns and parts of Hebron — together known as "Area A," the Palestinians will be in full control.

Israeli troops will also pull back from some rural areas, referred to in the 460-page draft as "Area B." In these

areas, Palestinian police will be deployed, but Israeli soldiers will have freedom of movement, such as the ability to chase Palestinian militants suspected of attacking Israelis.

Israel will remain in full control of the remainder of the West Bank, including the 130 Jewish settlements and military installations.

There have been conflicting reports of how much land is being handed to Palestinian control. Israeli newspapers said Friday that areas A and B amounted to 40 per cent of the West Bank, a figure confirmed by an Israeli official. However, other reports said the Palestinians were only gaining control over 30 per cent of the land.

In Hebron, Israeli troops will pull back to about one-seventh of the municipal area, including the six settler compounds, the Ibrahim Mosque and access roads to the settlements.

The town's military headquarters, a symbol of occupation, will be handed to the Palestinians, according to Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natheh.

"The moment the solution was found through the creation of a bypass road, there was no longer any reason for army presence in the heart of the city," Mr. Peres told army radio Saturday.

Still unresolved is the fate of the 6000 Palestinian security detainees. Israel has agreed to release 1,000 after

(Continued on page 7)

Stranded Palestinians head for Gaza through Jordan, Egypt

CAIRO (Agencies) — More than 150 Palestinians stranded for weeks on the Libyan border crossed Saturday into Egypt en route to Jordan and the Gaza Strip.

A second group of 40 Palestinians reportedly headed for Rafah on the Egyptian border with Gaza, also hoping to enter the Palestinian-controlled area.

Word of the two departures drew other Palestinians to the Libyan-Egyptian frontier in hopes of returning home. Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported.

The exodus — launched when Libyan leader Moammar Qadhafi began expelling Palestinians last month to protest the Israeli-Arab peace process — could end with the refugees stuck at other frontiers.

This is because it is not clear if they have the residency papers Israel requires for admission to Gaza. According to Palestinian officials in Egypt, some carry only visitors permits which may not be honoured by the Jewish state.

Panos Mountzis, a dele-

gate with the Cairo office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, said he did not know if Israel would admit the travellers.

"I don't know if they (the Egyptians) are throwing the problem from one border to another," he told the Associated Press.

Egyptian officials refused to comment. Israeli officials could not immediately be reached because of the Sabbath.

Egypt had previously barred the Palestinians from crossing, leaving 143 of the Palestinians in no-man's land near the Salloum border post while Libya and Egypt refused to accept them.

A convoy of 18 taxis and two mini-buses, was travelling across Egypt escorted by police after being granted permission late on Friday to enter the country.

The 158 Palestinians were en route for the Egyptian Red Sea port of Nuweibeh to take a ferry to Agaba in Jordan before crossing into the Palestinian territories, officials here said.

Many of those who had slept under the stars in the

desert for the past three weeks were looking forward to finally completing their journey after being forced to leave Libya in a clampdown on Palestinians.

But for some their problems were still not over. A spokesman at the Jordanian embassy in Cairo said his country would only allow those with Jordanian passports or resident permits issued by Israel to cross the border.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) representative to the Arab League in Cairo, Mohammad Sobeih, said the Palestinians headed for Jordan had Egyptian travel documents allowing them to cross the country.

But they had to pass through Jordan because Israel insists that Palestinians who leave via the King Hussein Bridge must return the same way.

Some of them, who left the Gaza Strip in 1967 when Israel occupied the territory after the Arab-Israeli war, had only the Egyptian documents. The luckier ones also had Israeli resident cards.

(Continued on page 3)

Old controversy resurfaces after new report of media ties with Iraqi regime

By Narmeen Murad

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In a resurgence of an old controversy that had played the Jordanian press a leading newspaper columnist declared yesterday that he was taking the London-based Al Hayat newspaper to court over a report carried by the newspaper alleging that 42 Jordanian media and business personalities are on the payroll of the Iraqi regime.

Tareq Masarweh wrote in his column in Al Ra'i Arabic daily that he wants to take the Saudi-owned paper to court over the

report which it carried on Wednesday, claiming the possession of a list of names of people who have allegedly been receiving money and presents from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"We will go to court as of today," declared Mr. Masarweh in his widely read column. "We will go to court and we will sue Al Hayat newspaper — its owners, its editor-in-chief and its correspondent in Amman" — over the report, according to which the Jordanian government has opened an investigation into the matter.

"We will go to court to find out who are these 'informed sources' and 'official sources' who have relayed to Al Hayat the 'government concern' over the Iraqi campaign," Mr. Masarweh said.

"This official source who knows the names of 42 recipients of Iraqi payments — and all he does is declare his concern to Al Hayat — should be removed from his post," Mr. Masarweh demanded.

In his column, he did not mention the Amman correspondent of Al Hayat, Salameh Ne'matt, by name.

In his article, Mr. Ne'matt reported that the list included the names of journalists, columnists, former senior officials as well as one columnist and current minister. He did not reveal any names in his report, however.

In the article in Al Hayat, which later appeared in the Jordanian weekly Al Mashreq, Mr. Ne'matt quoted unnamed "official sources" as saying that Jordanian authorities have opened an investigation into what they said was an "Iraqi media and trade campaign" in Jordan to "create a Jordanian move-

ment to counter ... Jordan's support for a change in regime in Iraq."

Mr. Ne'matt was unphased by Mr. Masarweh's threat. "I don't mind going to court to defend my article," he told the Jordan Times.

"What I did was to report that a list of 42 names has been compiled, and that that list does exist," Mr. Ne'matt said adding that in his report: "I did not get into the business of trying to verify whether or not these people did actually receive money. I just reported the fact that the list existed. 'I am not liable

in court because I did not name names."

"I was not reporting on how the list was compiled or how it got to the Jordanian authorities," he said. "What I was interested in was reporting the facts and the fact is that the list does exist. I am not liable for slandering anyone because I did not mention names."

But Mr. Masarweh believes otherwise.

"(Ne'matt) alleged that journalists receive payment from Iraq and even if he did not name them he is liable because he tarnished the name of everyone in the journalism business and

that is slander," Mr. Masarweh said, adding that 12 lawyers have already volunteered to take his case against Al Hayat to court.

"The Jordan Press Association and the Ministry of Information have also discussed pressing charges against Al Hayat because they consider the report slanderous against journalists," Mr. Masarweh said.

Jordan Press Association President Suleiman Qudah confirmed to the Jordan Times that his group was looking into pressing charges against Al Hayat but said that no final decision had been taken yet.

"If we find that the report infringed on the reputation of journalists in Jordan, then we are going to press charges against Al Hayat," Mr. Qudah said.

"We in the press are not on the butt of attacks or on an unknown quantity, nor is our address Baghdad, Riyadh, Cairo or Damascus. Our address has been and will always remain Amman," Mr. Masarweh said in his column.

Mr. Ne'matt questioned Mr. Masarweh's obvious anger at the report. He pointed to published re-

(Continued on page 7)

Sheikh crusades in court against Egypt's secularists

CAIRO (AFP) — Sheikh Yousef Al Badri, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, has made himself the defender of Islam in Egypt's courts and a thorn in the side of "impious" secularists.

The greatest victory in his crusade came in June when he won a judgement of "apostasy" against a university professor, Nasser Hamed Abu Zeid for his "blasphemous" scholarly writings.

Round-faced and smiling, with a white beard and piercing look, Sheikh Badri, 57, has for 20 years won the white "galabeya" robe and "imama" turban of a traditional Muslim pious man.

But the retired teacher and former deputy and amateur theatre director proudly shows off photos of himself in his wild youth, wearing a Western suit and tie.

Sheikh Badri has led 25 court cases in 1995 against cinema owners, journalists and intellectuals whom he accused of hanging "obscene" movie posters, writing "anti-religious" articles or publishing "immoral" cartoons.

Some 20 volunteer lawyers work with Sheikh Badri in his flurry of cases, but the sheikh attends all court sessions.

"As a student of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), I edit all cases to strengthen the lawyers' arguments," he told AFP.

And he is tireless in pursuing his prey. Sheikh Badri lost his first case against Dr. Abu Zeid, but he was vindicated two years later when an appeals court ordered the professor divorced from his wife on the ground that a Muslim woman can not be married to a heretic.

Now Sheikh Badri is working to knock down a series of appeals against the ruling by Dr. Abu Zeid and others.

"The courtroom is the best weapon," said Sheikh Badri, who rejects the violent methods of militant

groups fighting since three years to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak and establish an Islamic state.

"Islamic militants serve the interests of their organisation, not their cause of God," he said.

But he has also fallen out with the Muslim Brotherhood, which also renounces violence. The banned group accuses Sheikh Badri of having publicly sworn allegiance to Mr. Mubarak in 1987.

Rather than being linked to Islamic groups, Sheikh Badri goes it alone, backed by his status as a "sheikh," a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

"My father belonged to the Hashemite clan and my great-grandparents came in Egypt at the end of the 17th century from the Hijaz," the region of present-day Saudi Arabia where Mecca is located, he said.

In his apartment in the upper-class Cairo suburb of Maadi, his library boasts dozens of books on Islam as well as literary works. "I read the entire works of (Nobel Literature Laureate) Nequib Mahfuz to prove his impiety."

After finishing his studies in 1959, the sheikh tried out journalism, then created a theatre group in order to "use the theatre to defend the values of Islam."

"But I soon renounced it because I realised that artists do not respect the principles of Islam," Sheikh Badri said.

While teaching in Algeria from 1964 to 1968, he married a French Christian after convincing her to embrace Islam, but then divorced her when she took up her former religion again.

In 1992 he went to New Jersey where he led prayers in the mosque of Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, suspected in the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing in New York.

Two years later he packed his bags and left, angry with the spiritual leader of the militant Gamaa Islamiyah group.



WOMEN FIGHTERS: A women's unit of Basij (volunteer militia) marches in front of Iranian President Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani and other Iranian leaders on Friday during celebrations marking what Iran sees as the beginning of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war (AFP photo)

UAE weekly condemns uproar over Filipina maid's sentence

ABU DHABI (R) — A United Arab Emirates (UAE) weekly magazine lashed out at the uproar over condemned Filipina maid Sarah Balabagan, saying it is part of a campaign designed to prevent Arab and Muslim states from handing down justice.

Al Shurouq, in an editorial faxed to Reuters ahead of its publication on Monday, described the 23,000 Filipina maids who work in the UAE as landmines that needed to be cleared for the sake of national security.

"Should we give her a rose for killing this man? Or should we give her a present and honour her," said Al Shurouq of Ms. Balabagan, sentenced to death for the premeditated killing of her employer Almas Mohammad Al Baloushi.

"As Arabs and Muslims we are always condemned as the suspects. They are not allowing us to apply our own laws."

The editorial was one of the first to appear in the UAE print media since an Islamic court in Al Ain handed down the death sentence against Ms. Balabagan, a Muslim, on Sept. 16.

The court rejected her claim that she stabbed Baloushi 34 times in self-defence after wrestling his knife away during a rape. UAE President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan had ordered a retrial after the same court sentenced her to seven years imprisonment for manslaughter. In the first trial the court also awarded her compensation after concluding she was raped.

The case has unleashed outrage on the Philippines, reigniting fury that swept the country when another Filipina maid, Flor Contemplacion, was hanged in Singapore in March.

"Sooner or later we have to remove these mines. Our national

security depends on a quick clearing of the fields from these mines," Al Shurouq said of the Filipina maids working in the UAE.

"The Filipino screams for Flor the killer in Singapore had hardly subsided when they erupted again for the sake of Sarah the killer in the UAE."

UAE officials, worried that the uproar in the Philippines may undermine the image of their traditionally low-key Gulf Arab state, say pressure from Manila could diminish Ms. Balabagan's chances of winning leniency in appeals courts.

Three top Filipino ministers seeking Ms. Balabagan's release are due to arrive in Abu Dhabi in the first week of October.

Philippines officials, Ms. Balabagan and her lawyers say she is 16, but the UAE says she is 27 based on documents the embassy said were forged by Manila racketeers.

she financed a school for over 600 needy children; Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the U.S. Prince Bandar Al Saud and Dr. Ali Al Shamlan, director of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science.

Rice University is also home for another institution whose leadership is familiar to many in the Middle East, the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, founded in October 1994. The former secretary of state, who ushered in the Middle East peace process, has early and strong ties with the university. His grandfather was the first chairman of the university's board of trustees.

The first director of the Institute is Edward P. Djerejian, who, until his appointment at Rice, was the U.S. ambassador to Israel. Prior to that appointment, he was on Baker's team as the assistant secretary of state for the Near East and, earlier, as ambassador to Syria. He also served in Beirut and Amman.

Unknown group threatens to kill Americans

GAZA CITY (AFP) — A previously unknown Palestinian group threatened on Saturday to kill Americans living in the autonomous Gaza Strip and the West Bank in revenge for the detention of a prominent fundamentalist.

The group, calling itself the Students of Musa Abu Marzouk, after a leading member of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, held in New York, made the threat in a statement sent to AFP.

In the statement entitled "Warning for every dirty American who lives in our beautiful country," the group vowed to turn the Gaza Strip and the West Bank into another Lebanon, where foreigners were at risk in the 1980s during the war.

"You must know that Students of Musa Abu Marzouk can abduct every American here in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and we can shoot on every American easily," the statement said.

The group, which said it was not linked to Hamas, added: "We warn you if your government doesn't liberate our leader, we will make you live in fright and fear here."

"Death for Americans," it concluded.

A right-wing Jewish extremist group went on state television Friday and vowed to assassinate Palestinians and Jews to try to bring down the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Wearing black balaclavas hiding their faces apart from their eyes, five members of the right-wing Eyal group, styling themselves the "Jewish Fighting Organisation" were filmed taking an oath on a Bible and pistol.

"We promise to punish the traitors, to execute the pseudo-Jews who collaborate with the Arab enemy. Every Arab is a potential terrorist and must be treated as one," said an 18-year-old member of the group soon to join the Israeli army.

Ciller has a shaky start in bid for new coalition

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's Tansu Ciller got off to a shaky start in her bid to form a coalition government on Saturday after the main opposition leader virtually ruled out an alliance with her True Path Party (DYP).

"Ciller has not given us a coalition proposal... and she did not accept any of our proposals," Motherland Party (ANAP) leader Mesut Yilmaz told the semi-official Anatolian news agency after meeting Ms. Ciller in parliament.

"Ciller is fully responsible for the failure to form a wide-based coalition with ANAP and the DYP," he said.

President Suleyman Demirel asked Ms. Ciller on Thursday to form a new government, a day after she quit in a rift over domestic security issues with the Social Democrats, under new leader Deniz Baykal, ending the wobbly coalition between them and her conservative DYP.

Turkish television showed a visibly stern and tight-lipped Ciller as she left the meeting with Mr. Yilmaz for talks with Mr. Baykal and meet leaders of the Islamist Welfare Party, the nationalists and the Democratic Left Party.

Mr. Yilmaz said Ms. Ciller had insisted on a stable coalition until normal election time, in October 1996. Mr. Yilmaz has set early elections as a condition for a coalition.

"She said if we did not agree on this point, then there was no point in any agreement we reach on other issues," he said.

Most speculation has so far focused on a DYP-ANAP alliance, which has in the past been seen as a more viable alternative to the left-right coalition.

Mr. Baykal and Islamist Party officials emerged from short talks with Ms. Ciller, saying she had given them no



Tansu Ciller

definite coalition offer, but had talked of the importance of evading early polls.

Islamist Welfare Party officials told the Anatolian News Agency Ms. Ciller appeared to be aiming to persuade other party deputies to join her party for a solo government or to seek a minority government if that failed.

Ms. Ciller's office said she was likely to make a decision on the future of the government at the end of Saturday's talks.

Ms. Ciller said on Friday she was seeking a stable, long-term government that would get a vote of confidence in parliament.

"We want to form a government of solution, not election," Ms. Ciller said after a meeting with her DYP administration council.

Any new government must get a vote of confidence in parliament, a simple majority of those voting out of the 428 deputies. The DYP has 182 seats in the 450-seat parliament, ANAP has 96 and the Social Democrats have 65 seats.

Financial markets, which had suffered big drops after Ms. Ciller's Wednesday resignation, regained equilibrium by Friday, although stocks ended down an overall 7.1 per cent for the week.

Rebel Kurds kill 6, lose 3 in Turkey raid

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (R) — Rebel Kurds killed six

state-raid village guards and suffered three dead in an overnight village raid in southeast Turkey, security officials said on Saturday.

The emergency rule governor's office said guerrillas of the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) attacked a village near Silvan township in Siirt province late on Friday, killing six village guards, armed and paid by the state in its fight with the PKK.

Three PKK rebels were killed in the ensuing fighting, the governor's office said. Three village guards were injured.

There was no independent confirmation of the casualties.

In a separate Friday night attack, PKK militants kidnapped a senior prison official from Mazgirt district in the eastern province of Tunceli, security officials said.

More than 18,000 people have been killed in the PKK's 11-year fight for autonomy or independence in southeast Turkey.

Turkish security officials on Friday dismissed an expected ceasefire call by the PKK as a ploy to gain time and said the army would press on with the fight.

"The ceasefire is a trick, a scenario drawn up by the weakened terror organisation to gain time in winter," a senior military official in

Tunceli, site of fierce fighting, told Reuters.

The Germany-based pro-Kurdish DEM news agency had said PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was expected to announce a ceasefire Sept. 25 during a press conference.

But DEM on Friday quoted Mr. Ocalan as saying he was postponing the ceasefire because of the fall of the Turkish coalition government this week.

Mr. Ocalan told DEM he would announce a ceasefire when he could find someone to address. Prime Minister Tansu Ciller is currently trying to put together another coalition.

An army officer in Tunceli said: "We will continue army operations against the PKK."

Fighting in Tunceli usually slows in winter when deep snow makes the mountainous terrain difficult to pass.

In 1993 the PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire which held for just over two months until the guerrillas killed 33 unarmed soldiers in a bus ambush after complaining the military kept up attacks on rebels.

The government flatly rejects negotiating with the PKK.

The emergency rule governor's office, based in Diyarbakir, also reported on Friday Turkish troops killed six rebels in two separate overnight clashes in the southeast.

Rice University sets up chair for Arab studies

HOUSTON (USA) — Rice University, rated one of the top 20 institutions of higher learning in the United States, has announced the establishment of a new chair of Arab Studies, thanks to the efforts of the Arab-American community here which raised one million dollars for this purpose.

A search committee, headed by Dr. Allen Matusow, begins next week a world-wide search for a qualified educator to fill the position by next July.

Dr. Matusow explained that position is being offered on a tenured track, and the applicant must have background in Arab literature, history, philosophy and religion and be willing to teach introductory courses in Arab culture.

The former dean of humanities at Rice described the successful fund-raising effort by Arab-Americans, who number about 60,000 in the Houston area, as "a rare, grass-roots community undertaking."

Rice University is the fifth

American institution to establish a chair for Arab Studies. The others and holders of the chairs, are Harvard University (Muhsin Mahdi), Georgetown University (Irfan Shahid), University of Pennsylvania (George Makdisi), and University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (Ernest McCarus). There are several chairs at various universities on Middle East studies and some of these are held by Arab-American educators.

The drive for the establishment of an endowed chair at Rice University began about eight years ago by the Arab-American Educational Foundation (AAEF), recalled Amin Bohsali, a past president.

AAEF was founded in the mid-1980's by Arab-Americans in the Houston area who were eager to introduce Arab culture in their adopted country. Two years later they were able to sign an endowment establishing the guidelines and policies for the Arab Studies programme.

This was a necessary first

step, according to Bohsali, a financial consultant here, in order to launch the fund-raising effort.

At a ceremony where the donation was handed to Rice University President Malcolm Gillis, the current president of AAEF, Joumana Ghandour, said:

"We chose to work with Rice because of its excellent academic reputation and because they shared our vision of providing students with a true picture of the Arab world."

Another speaker, Dr. Abdul Kader Fustok, explained that "from the onset, we realised that one of the most effective ways of combatting ignorance and stereotyping is through the promotion of university-level education and research."

President Gillis praised the AAEF board members for going "to extraordinary lengths to secure support for the chair from other foundations and individuals in the United States and countries in the Middle East, notably Kuwait."

He added, "I have not seen anything to surpass the resourcefulness and determination of the members and board of directors of the foundation in bringing to the university this newest vessel of academic distinction."

President Gillis concluded, "indeed, in three decades of experience in leading private universities, I know of no similar group that has completed such an undertaking."

In a letter to her board members, AAEF President Ghandour spoke of the "great sense of accomplishment and pride" in turning over the one-million-dollar check to the university and went on to urge her colleagues to continue their efforts toward the establishment of an institute for Arab studies at Rice and a chair in the medical sciences.

Dr. Bohsali reported that many of the more than 200 contributions were raised at fund-raising occasions in Houston. Among the large donors were Latifah Al Afalq, a philanthropist from Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia where

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Deserts 13 / 31
Jordan Valley 21 / 35

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 28, Aqaba 36. Humidity
readings: Amman 45 per cent,
Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih 790104
Dr. Nidal As'ad 736112
Dr. Ghaleb Zaid 736111
Dr. Mukhlis Halseh 819220
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nisrallah pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 637330
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shimacani pharmacy 637660
Nairouh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu (—)
Alquds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Randa Shahin 995710
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637177
Fire Brigade 675121
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 893390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 658800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdoli Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electrical Power
Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381322

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.

644281/6
Akilish Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mafias, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmiciani 664171/4
Shmiciani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushter Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marika 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 607155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990910
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)272355
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272375
Ibn Al Nafas Hospital (02)47100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Bangkok (RJ)
06:15 Aqaba (RJ)
06:30 Jeddah (RJ)
06:45 Laraca (RJ)
06:55 Dhahran (RJ)
08:05 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
08:30 Beirut (RJ)
08:45 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
09:15 Zagreb (add) (RJ)
09:30 Vienna, Munich (RJ)
09:35 Athens (RJ)
09:45 Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
09:50 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
09:55 Brussels, Frankfurt (RJ)
10:00 Rome (RJ)
10:15 Vienna, Munich (RJ)
10:30 Athens (RJ)
10:45 Cairo (RJ)
11:00 Bahrain, Sharjah (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
07:30 Rome (AZ)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
13:30 Suma (YI)
14:30 Doha (GF)
14:45 Cairo (MS)
21:25 Moscow (SU)
21:35 Beirut, London (BA)
22:35 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Aqaba (RJ)
06:15 Beirut (RJ)
06:30 Jeddah (RJ)
06:45 Laraca (RJ)
06:55 Dhahran (RJ)
08:05 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
08:30 Beirut (RJ)
08:45 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
09:15 Zagreb (add) (RJ)
09:30 Vienna, Munich (RJ)
09:35 Athens (RJ)
09:45 Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
09:50 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
09:55 Brussels, Frankfurt (RJ)
10:00 Rome (RJ)
10:15 Vienna, Munich (RJ)
10:30 Athens (RJ)
10:45 Cairo (RJ)
11:00 Bahrain, Sharjah (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
07:30 Rome (AZ)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
13:30 Suma (YI)
14:30 Doha (GF)
14:45 Cairo (MS)
21:25 Moscow (SU)
21:35 Beirut, London (BA)
22:35 Amsterdam (KL)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Arr. Amman 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 600 / 600
Banana (Mukhammar) 600
Cabbage 150 / 80
Carrot 420/200
Cauliflower 240/40
Cucumbers (large) 150 / 120
Cucumbers (small) 300 / 200
Eggplant 250 / 150
Figs 330/250
Garlic 700/500
Grapes 750/600
Guava 650/500
Lemon 300/200
Marrow (large) 300 / 300
Marrow (small) 450 / 350
Mulukhia 140 / 80
Okra 850 / 700
Onion (dry) 240 / 180
Orange 480/380
Pasciety 100/800
Pepper (hot) 220 / 150
Pepper (sweet) 300 / 150
Pomegranate 340/250
Potato 270 / 170
String Beans 650 / 500
Tomato 230/80
Water Melon 110 / 70

Home News

Anti-peace parties to hold meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — Opponents of the peace treaty with Israel plan to hold a meeting Friday to press their campaign against normalising ties with the Jewish state, an organiser said Saturday.

Salem Nabhas, a member of the meeting's administrative committee, had earlier declined to specify the exact date, concerned that the government might "take precautionary measures" to prevent the meeting.

The hard-line coalition of nine groups, formed shortly after Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel on Oct. 26, 1994, is spearheaded by Islamists, who oppose any peace with the Jewish state, and leftists who regard the U.S.-backed Middle East peace process as biased in favour of Israel.

The hard-liners have planned a rally several times, but had to postpone it, accusing the government of stifling vocal opposition to the treaty.

On May 18, the government announced that the hard-liners could hold a public rally, but reversed that 11 days later, banning the rally shortly before it was to convene.

The government said the hard-liners had sought to instigate public disorder by calling on Jordanians to resist the treaty in a communiqué issued before the rally was held.

Mr. Nabhas told the Associated Press (AP) that since the May ban, hard-liners have met in small groups around the Kingdom to discuss "our goal to resist nor-

malising relations with Israel."

He said these meetings named representatives of the various groups to attend the planned Sept. gathering.

"The focus of our discussions at the upcoming meeting is to set up a unified national popular movement that will work toward defending Jordan's national interests and resisting any normalisation of relations with Israel," he said.

Mr. Nabhas noted that to circumvent any possible government action, the hard-liners will hold their meeting at "the headquarters of the one of the political parties." He declined to say which one.

However, a statement made available to the Jordan Times said the meeting will be held Friday at the headquarters of the HASHD party (the Jordan Democratic People's Party) in Jabal Hussein in Amman at 4:00 p.m.

"The government will not be able to interfere because the meeting will not be held in a public place in violation of regulations," Mr. Nabhas had earlier told AP. He said the meeting will not be public but will gather representatives of the opposition parties.

In another statement, the HASHD party denounced what it described as a stepped-up government campaign against professional unions.

It said as part of the government's preparations for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit, the government has

intensified its campaign against professional associations, especially through the committee preparing for a medical conference in the private sector and the Jordan Medical Association.

It said the government justifies its stands by saying that the Amman summit is an international conference dealing with the region's economies and that Israel's participation in the summit does not mean it will control its debates.

It added that the government also views the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and the law lifting the boycott of Israel as constitutional and thus it believes that the stand of the Jordan Medical Association is illegal and undemocratic.

"Some threats and leaks show that the government might dissolve the association's board because of its stand against normalising ties with Israel," the statement said.

HASHD said the October economic conference will only attempt to link the Jordanian economy with Israel's and will constitute a "failed attempt to bring to a successful end the surrender process."

The party said it was the citizens' constitutional right to oppose what they believe harmful to national interests and thus to resist the peace treaty and the law ending the boycott of Israel.

Workshop to assess labour relations

AMMAN (Petra) — A six-day workshop on labour relations between the government, employers and workers and related issues of production, social security and economics in the Arab countries started here Saturday.

Forty delegates representing government employers and workers in 20 Arab countries are attending.

Addressing the opening session, Minister of Labour Nader Abul Sha'ar said the workshop comes at a time when the Arab region is witnessing deep transformations at the political, social, economic and technological levels and that cooperation in labour relations can ensure progress and development.

Current changes worldwide have had a significant impact on Arab countries and their future, the minister said.

Arab governments, therefore, should conduct a comprehensive revision of their labour laws not only out of national interest but out of regional and pan-Arab interests as well, Mr.

Abul Sha'ar said.

Government employers and workers all have serious roles to play towards promoting production and stimulating Arab national economies and are called on to agree on legislation that guarantees the interests of the government, the employers and the workers, said the minister.

The Jordanian delegation is presenting a working paper in the workshop that expounds the close cooperation between the three sectors based on understanding and collective dialogue in labour disputes.

Arab Labour Organisation Director General Baker Rasoul said the workshop conforms with the Arab Labour Organisation's drive to regulate healthy labour relations that are characterised by effective communication between the three sections.

Also addressing the session was United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative Jørgen Lissner who said that sound labour



Minister of Labour Nader Abul Sha'ar (second left) Saturday addresses the opening of a seminar on labour relations in the Arab World (Petra photo)

relations constitute the best guarantee for the achievement of quality performance and production.

Constant dialogue between the three sections can help improve working

conditions, and raise the quality and quantity of products.

Social security issues and collective negotiations between workers and man-

agement are also among the topics on the agenda.

The workshop is organised by the UNDP and the Arab Labour Organisation in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour.

Ports director says Aqaba

explosion reports exaggerated

AQABA (Petra) — Jordanian Ports Corporation Director General Dureid Mahasneh Saturday said reports in the local press about a fire caused by an explosion at Aqaba port last week were incorrect and exaggerated.

Dr. Mahasneh said an explosion did occur in a container packed with nitro-cellulose, but only six containers sustained damage. These, he said, contained used clothing, equipment for the Arab Potash Company and dried milk.

Earlier reports about the explosion quoted the Civil Defence Department (CDD) as saying that the explosion ripped through dozens of containers on the pier and caused fire that engulfed a section of the

port of Aqaba.

Referring to the container with the nitro-cellulose shipment, Dr. Mahasneh said the ports corporation had received false information about the contents of the container which had actually been at sea for eight months before reaching Jordan. He said the extended period at sea caused a loss humidity in the containers which would make the contents more flammable under intense heat.

According to Dr. Mahasneh, the ship that brought the container docked at the harbour on Sept. 11, and the explosion occurred on Sept. 16. He said the resultant fire was extinguished in about an hour.



Participants Saturday attend the opening of a seminar on human resources organised by the Ministry of Planning in cooperation with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (Petra photo)

Private sector plans final meeting in advance of MENA summit

AMMAN (Petra) — The private sector executive committee preparing for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit will hold its fourth and final roundtable meeting on Oct. 3, according to committee chairman Thabet Taher.

Mr. Taher said the committee will consider a final report on the preparations by the private sector for the coming conference and will review a list of projects that will be submitted to the conference.

The executive committee will also review the names of participating delegates from various countries and

arrangements for side meetings between Jordanian and foreign businessmen during the three-day conference, Mr. Taher added.

He said he did not expect agreements on joint schemes to be signed during the three-day meetings, and added that the Jordanian private sector should be realistic and not exaggerate hopes and expectations.

Mr. Thabet said that the private sector's contributions to the conference are considered by the committee as a national duty and an opportunity to contribute to the advancement of the Jordanian economy.

Seminar to discuss human resources, education and the labour market

AMMAN (Petra) — Issues regarding human resources development, women in the labour market and the link between education and the needs of the local job market in Jordan will be the focus of discussion at a two-day seminar which opened here Saturday.

The seminar will also address issues on voluntary social work, unemployment and the 1993-1997 five-year development plan prepared by the Ministry of Planning.

Ministry Secretary General Nabil Ammari opened

the meeting by stating that Jordan faces immense challenges in its drive to develop human resources in the country.

These can be best addressed by sound planning and dedicated efforts on the part of all sectors and public organisations working in cooperation to ensure continued construction, development and progress, said Dr. Ammari.

The delegates reviewed four working papers dealing with vocational training needs, businesswomen in small scale enterprises, the

role of social and voluntary job search organisations and efforts to limit guest workers to the Kingdom by replacing them with local workers.

The participants include specialists and researchers in population and human resources from public and private organisations.

The seminar is organised by the Ministry of Planning in cooperation with the U.N. Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan, Jordan talk about oil spills

AMMAN (Petra) — An advisory team representing the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) arrived in Amman Saturday to hold talks with officials at the Jordanian Ports Corporation on bilateral cooperation. The main focus of the talks will be the prospect of signing an agreement between the corporation and a Japanese company on means to combat oil pollution in the Gulf of Aqaba. On Sept. 13, the Jordanian and Japanese governments exchanged memos of understanding on a grant agreement under which the Japanese government offered a 547-yen (\$5.6 million) grant to the corporation to be used in purchasing equipment to combat oil leakage. The Japanese team's trip will last till the end of the month.

Products to go on display at Cologne Fair

AMMAN (Petra) — Twelve Jordanian companies will take part in the Cologne '95 fair which will be held Sept. 30-Oct. 5. The Jordanian companies will display samples of their products, including food supplies and agricultural produce. The fair in Cologne, considered the trade capital of Europe, is one of the largest exhibitions in the world displaying agricultural products and food supplies. Companies representing more than 100 countries will take part in the fair. The Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCCO) is coordinating the Jordanian companies' participation in the fair. Jordan will also take part in the second Arab-African trade fair which will be opened in Johannesburg, South Africa, Oct. 6. The nine-day exhibition is organised by the Arab League, the Organisation of African Unity as well as South Africa.

UNESCO plans meeting on school activities programme

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part

Bridges to close during Jewish holiday

AMMAN (Petra) — The King Hussein and Prince Mohammad bridges linking Jordan with the West Bank will be closed at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, the Public Security Department (PSD) announced. The PSD said the bridges over the Jordan River will be closed to travellers on Tuesday and Wednesday Sept. 25-26. It said the bridges will be reopened Wednesday morning. The closures coincide with the observance in Israel of the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashana (the New Year).

Ministry registers 52 new projects

AMMAN (Petra) — Fifty-two industrial and commercial projects with a combined capital of JD 7.83 million were registered with the Ministry of Industry and Trade during July, according to sources at the ministry. The sources said 46 of the projects were established in Amman, four in Madaba, one in Irbid and another in Balqa. They said a total of JD 2.895 million were invested by foreigners in these projects, expected to provide 532 job opportunities.

Stranded Palestinians head for Gaza

(Continued from page 1)

Col. Qadhafi began ordering Palestinian workers out of the country last month and announced the policy in a speech Sept. 1 marking 26 years of his rule.

He apparently was trying to embarrass the PLO by showing that the ejected Palestinians had no place to go. The PLO-Israel peace agreements to date do not include provisions for Palestinians who fled with the creation of the Jewish state in 1948.

After criticism from other Arab countries, Libyan officials in recent days have said the Palestinians were not ex-

pelled but were leaving voluntarily. Libya also has deported thousands of Egyptian and Sudanese labourers on grounds they lack proper work permits.

Omar Khatib, chief of the PLO mission in Jordan, said the Palestinians will be escorted "as soon as they arrive in Jordan" to the King Hussein Bridge. From there they will go to the Palestinian-controlled Gaza, he said.

He added: "Israel can't deny them entry to the self-rule areas because their papers are legal."

Meanwhile, some 36 Palestinians who have been stranded at Rafah for days heard of the other groups moving and tried to enter Gaza on Saturday, U.N. officials said. Israeli authorities turned them back, they said.

The Palestinians in this group hold visitors' permits, and Israel apparently has turned them away on grounds they are likely to overstay them.

The Palestinians had been living without shelter between the borders and were dependent on the charity of travellers crossing the frontier for survival.

WHAT'S GOING ON

SWISS CULTURAL WEEK

Films

* "The Mountain," and "Jacques and Françoise," (with subtitles in Arabic) at 5:00pm and 8:00pm at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Exhibitions

* Two photography exhibitions: "Swiss photographers since 1840 until today," and "Face to Face with Switzerland," at the RCC.

FILM

* "The Candidate," at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Jordanian-Syrian-Turkish products at King Abdullah Gardens, Al Bassam Hall.

* Abstract artworks by Abdullah Tamimi entitled, "Colours of Peace," at the Royal Cultural Centre.

* "Works by Hani Khaza'leh at the Goethe Institut, Jabal Amman.

* Ceramics by Dr. Mahmoud Sadiq and Da'd Al Mafih at the Marriott Hotel.

* Works by Lamia Abdel Sahib and Samer Ousama entitled "Aux Sources

Orientales de la Fontaine," at the French Cultural Centre.

* Paintings by Sudanese artists at Baladna Art Gallery.

* "Beneath the Waves," photographs on

Aqaba underwater life by Julia Reinhold at The Gallery, Hotel InterContinental.

* Paintings by Palestinian artist Samira Badran at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.

* Works by artist Ghazi 'Asayrah at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.

* Paintings by Palestinian artist Samira Badran at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman.

DARAT AL FUNUN

* Graphic work by several artists and students in the South Gallery.

* Photography of Jordan, "Elements in Harmony" by Hala Hilmi Hodeib at the Blue House.

* Painted stone and steel, "Embargo Art" by Iraqi artist Nuha Al Radi at the Garden of the Blue House.

* "Early Morning Scribbles" by Lebanese artist Amin Al Bacha and Jordanian artist Rajwa Bint Ali and "Late Night Scribbles" by Amin Al Bacha and Jordanian artist Ali Bermamet

* Open Air Sculpture workshop. Ceramic shop at the Lower Garden.

* Ceramic shop at the Lower Garden.

* Works by contemporary Arab artists at the Central Gallery.

'Exports increase 20 %'

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian exports in the first seven months of 1995 increased by 20.1 per cent, rising to JD 517.2 million from JD 430.6 million in the same period last year, according to Assistant Director General of the Statistics Department Ismael Abul Sundus.

Dr. Abul Sundus said the Kingdom's exports of vegetable oil totalled JD 73 million, fertilisers JD 66.1 million, potash JD 58.9 million, phosphates JD 58.7 million, pharmaceuticals JD 43.4 million, fruits and vegetables JD 33.6 million and cement JD 16.3 million.

He said JD 65.5 million worth of exports went to India, JD 30.6 million to Saudi Arabia, JD 21.3 million to the United Arab Emirates, JD 19.3 million to Syria, JD 17.6 million to Lebanon, JD 12 million to Indonesia, JD 11.2 million to Turkey, JD 11.2 million to Ethiopia and JD 11.1 million to Italy.

He said Jordan imported JD 1,457.2 million worth of commodities from foreign countries in the same period, noting that this means an increase of 14.4 per cent in the Kingdom's imports. He said Jordan imported oil and oil derivatives worth JD 176.7 million, machineries and kilns worth JD 145.6 million, cars and spare parts worth JD 112.8 million, iron worth JD 89.5 million, grains worth JD 101.5 million, vegetable oil worth JD 52.4 million, paper worth JD 48.3 million, electric appliances worth JD 62.8 million and fabrics and garments worth JD 55.2 million.

Dr. Abul Sundus said JD 172.6 million of the imports came from Iraq, JD 160.7 million from the U.S., JD 119.4 million from Germany, JD 73 million from the United Kingdom, JD 68 million from Italy, JD 54.1 million from Japan, JD 51.2 million from Turkey, JD 54 million from Saudi Arabia, JD 76.6 million from France, JD 44.6 million from Malaysia, JD 39.7 million from South Korea, JD 39.6 million from the Netherlands, JD 33.3 million from China and JD 27.3 million from Syria.

4 Russians hurt in Chechenya mine blast

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Four Russian troops in Chechenya were injured by a mine blast and rebels fired on Moscow's troops 17 times in 24 hours in continued shooting that has troubled peace efforts in the rebel republic, Interfax News Agency said.

Quoting the Russian Military Press Service, Interfax said most of the rebel fire was aimed at Russian soldiers in Achkhoy Martan in western Chechenya and left several injured.

Russian military spokesman Ivan Yessitlin told the ITAR-TASS news agency the situation in Achkhoy Martan "confirmed reports from Russian troop commanders who said this location had been chosen as the target for new attacks at a recent meeting of Chechen chiefs attended by Dzhokhar Dudayev," Chechenya's separatist president.

The spokesman said the increase there both in attacks by rebels using grenades and mortars and those by small armed groups showed that Mr. Dudayev's supporters were hoping to use force to increase their area of operation.

On Friday the two sides held talks in the Chechen capital Grozny and top Russian negotiator Minister Viacheslav Mikhailov said they discussed the demilitarisation accord of July 30. This called for disarming rebels and pulling out all but 6,000 Russian soldiers from the shattered republic, but has barely been implemented.

Mr. Mikhailov said the two sides had reached agreement "on several difficult questions" over the July 30 accord but gave no details.

The spokesman for the separatist government Movladi Udogov said the two sides had reached a compromise.

Russian troops backed by air power stormed into Chechenya last December to topple Mr. Dudayev, who declared unilateral independence from Russian in 1991.

Since then, between 15,000 and 30,000 people, many of them civilians, have been killed, according to various estimates.

President Yeltsin, trying to douse tension in Chechenya after his personal envoy was nearly assassinated, said Friday that

Moscow remained committed to ending the conflict in the rebel region peacefully.

Mr. Yeltsin resisted any impulse to crack down in Chechenya after the apparent attempt on Oleg Lobov's life, but said some rebels were trying to sabotage the peace process.

"What has happened in Chechenya is a tragedy, our common tragedy. And we will overcome its consequences together," Mr. Yeltsin said in a statement issued from the Black Sea resort of Sochi, where he is on vacation.

"At this crucial moment, I deem it necessary to confirm the adherence of the president to peaceful political methods of dealing with the problems in the Chechen Republic, however acute and insurmountable they might be."

In a clear sign that he wanted to avoid any flare-up in fighting, Mr. Yeltsin's statement carried none of the ultimatums or threats included in many earlier declarations on Chechenya.

Tension rose in Chechenya after Mr. Lobov narrowly escaped death Wednesday when a bomb exploded on a bridge outside the regional capital Grozny as his car passed by.

Tension was further fuelled by explosions at an oil refinery and oil storage plant and rows between Moscow and the separatist rebels over a military agreement signed on July 30.

Mr. Yeltsin made clear he was determined not to let peace talks collapse now that he has opted for dialogue after months of fighting between the rebels and Russian troops.

"I regard it as my duty to protect the peace process in the Chechen Republic against those who bank on the intrigues of war, profit from robbery and do not care about the lives of their compatriots," Mr. Yeltsin said.

"I call on those people to come to their senses. Enough blood has been spilled. You and your loved ones need peace, a calm life to heal the wounds and restore what has been destroyed so that the elderly may have peace and the young have a future."

Meanwhile a local official said Friday Chechenya could face dire food shortages this winter.

The once-rich farming region is short of seed, fuel and farming equipment and most of its cattle are gone, according to Lecho

musayev, an official with the provisional government. His comments were reported by the ITAR-TASS news agency.

Mr. Musayev told ITAR-TASS that most of the funds supposedly earmarked by the Russian government for reviving Chechenya's agricultural sector had not reached the region.

Only a small amount of grain has been put aside for the winter, he said.

He also complained about land reforms enacted by Russian-backed officials. The reforms took land away from collectives and state farms and put it in the hands of local officials, Mr. Musayev said the result has been an "ill-considered and unfair" division of property.

Much of Chechenya's industrial base was also destroyed in the war and tens of thousands of people have become refugees since Russian troops poured into the region in December in a bid to end its self-declared independence.

The fighting has died down in past months, but sporadic clashes continue and an accord on disarming the rebels and pulling out Russian troops has fallen dormant amid mutual recriminations and distrust.



Bob Dole, the Republican presidential campaign front-runner, speaks recently in Washington D.C. (AFP photo)

Publisher Forbes joins U.S. presidential race

WASHINGTON (R) — Multi-millionaire publisher Malcolm Forbes Jr. opened a long-shot Republican presidential bid Friday as a businessman who can "unlock the stranglehold that the political class has on American life."

Mr. Forbes, 48, president of Forbes Inc. and editor in chief of Forbes magazine, a biweekly business periodical, announced his candidacy as a Washington "outsider" before an audience of family, friends and reporters at the National Press Club.

He noted wryly that "a few sceptics" doubt his bid for the 1996 Republican nomination will get far in a field crowded with nine other contenders of some national note and dominated by U.S. Senate majority leader Bob Dole.

"But I am throwing my hat into the ring today in full confidence that this campaign for president will succeed," said Mr. Forbes, the heir to a family magazine fortune.

He is willing to spend his own money on the race — aides said up to \$25 million — to promote a classic free-enterprise agenda designed to let the American economy "run free."

It centres on scrapping the federal income tax in favour of a 17 per cent flat tax and returning the dollar to the gold standard as a way to unleash the American economy.

"I am running because I believe this nation needs someone in the White House who can break the old pattern, someone who can unlock the stranglehold that the political class has on American life," said Mr. Forbes, known to his friends as "Steve".

He said he could lead "a liberation movement to take power away from

Washington and put it in the hands of the people."

Mr. Forbes, little known outside the business community or the readership of his magazine, faces an uphill struggle against better known rivals for the right to face Democratic President Bill Clinton in the November 1996 ballot.

Sen. Dole is currently running 30 or more percentage points ahead of his nearest challenger, Texas Senator Phil Gramm, in virtually all polls of Republican Party supporters.

They and seven others have been running national campaigns for months, preparing for primary elections and internal party votes that will start selecting national nominating convention delegates next February.

A big question mark in the political picture is whether popular retired General Colin Powell enters the race as a Republican or independent, or stays out of it altogether. Polls show he would be a strong nomination contender and might beat Mr. Clinton as the Republican nominee.

Gen. Powell has said he expects to announce a decision in November after he concludes a nationwide book-promotion tour.

Mr. Forbes said any of the announced Republicans would be better than Mr. Clinton but charged that their "vision of what we can do is narrow, cramped and constricted. They have been in Washington or in politics, or both, all of their adult lives."

Mr. Forbes, who lives in Bedminster, New Jersey, is married and the father of five daughters. His wife and children had front-row seats at his declaration ceremony.

Gay, lesbian get married to protest ban on adoption

COPENHAGEN. — Denmark (AP) — A gay man exchanged vows with a lesbian woman in public protest against a ban on homosexual adoptions and artificial insemination. In 1989, Denmark became the first country in the world to allow homosexuals to enter registered partnerships with all the rights and obligations of marriage, except adopting a child or obtaining semen for conception. So by marrying each other, Soeren Laursen and Birgitte Echwald, dressed in a white wedding gown, won the legal right to try to adopt children, even though they are homosexual. In a civil ceremony they called "a wedding against discrimination," the newlyweds said their vows were meant as a "pure political manifesto." "We had to stage this to push the politicians," said Mr. Aursen, 31, who chairs the National Homosexual Association. Ms. Echwald, 27, is the group's deputy chairwoman. The ceremony in front of the media at the Copenhagen Town Hall was attended by dozens of homosexuals, including the couple's same-sex companions. Denmark's health minister, Yvonne Herloef Andersen, recently suggested giving homosexual the rights they claim. But there is no majority in parliament supporting her. Opponents insist children should grow up with male and female parents.

Canada rejects extending legal rights to gay couples

OTTAWA (AP) — The House of Commons has rejected a gay legislator's proposal to extend legal recognition to same-sex marriages. Real Menard, a member of the opposition Bloc Quebecois, said he was disappointed by the 124-52 vote rejecting his motion, but vowed to keep trying. "We can win other fights to change the human rights act," Mr. Menard said. "The next fight we will win." Mr. Menard was backed by most of his Bloc Quebecois colleagues, although eight of the 53-member caucus joined the majority in opposing the motion. A few lawmakers from the governing Liberal Party, including Deputy Prime Minister Sheila Copps, supported Mr. Menard.

Taste test finds new poisonous bird

TABUBIL, Papua New Guinea (R) — Ornithologists are quietly confident they have found a second poisonous bird in the rainforests of north western Papua New Guinea — the Variable Pitohui. Phil Gregory, publisher of Papua New Guinea's ornithological journal *Muruk*, said ornithologists believe the Variable Pitohui, like the Hooded Pitohui, is also toxic. "I was given a juvenile Variable Pitohui and when I licked the feathers I felt my mouth tingle and go numb," Mr. Gregory said. "This suggests this bird is toxic as well but it is not proven yet."

EU summit leaves Majorca tourists cold

ALCUDIA, Majorca (R) — Holidaymakers hoping to soak up the sun in Majorca gave a distinctly chilly welcome to Europe's leaders. "Why didn't they just stay at home and make a few phone calls, it's ridiculous all this expense," Louise, a British secretary from Edinburgh, said as helicopters overhead ferried leaders to an informal European Union summit. "I wouldn't mind if they did something useful — like help me find a better hotel, ours is crap," said Ann Winter from Manchester. "The Germans would not put up with it, that's for sure," she added.

Albright hits U.N. on reform of bureaucracy

UNITED NATIONS (R) — With Washington heavily in arrears to the United Nations, U.S. ambassador Madeleine Albright served notice Friday she was making reform of the U.N. bureaucracy a top priority during the 50th anniversary celebrations.

"We must recognise that during the years of cold war neglect, the U.N. bureaucracy grew to elephantine proportions," she said at the Foreign Press Centre.

"Now, in the absence of cold war divisions, we are asking that elephant to do gymnastics."

Reform of the bureaucracy, the Security Council and other organs is a mantra of this year's General Assembly session. But another underlying theme, articulated by Europeans, is the \$1.2 billion debt owed by Washington for 1995 and past years.

Aware of the criticism, Mrs. Albright said the United States views "the United Nations as an important instrument for making the world more secure, democratic and humane." She said the Clinton administration would continue to do all it could to help the United Nations succeed "and to see that U.S. financial obligations are met, despite opposition from some in Congress."

The United Nations' regular annual budget is \$1.3 billion, but peacekeeping costs nearly three times that amount, most of it for troops in the former Yugoslavia. Specialised agencies, such as UNICEF, run on separate budgets.

Specifically, she urged reform or consolidation of some major U.N. institutions and said the Assembly should consider:

— Decreases in the U.N.

budget, rather than zero real growth, which allows budgets to rise with inflation.

— Privatising some services, cutting staff, particularly non-professionals, stopping unnecessary travel, and minimising the use of consultants. She targeted the Department of Public Information for sharp reductions.

— Restructuring the Economic and Social Council, a major U.N. organ whose organisational chart looks like it was "designed by a crazed kitten in a string factory." Its commission on sustainable development should be transferred to Geneva and folded into other bodies, like the Commission on Science and Technology.

— Extend the concept of an inspector general from the main secretariat to all major agencies.

— Open deliberations of the Assembly's Advisory

Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions so governments could see how countries with seats on the panel spend U.N. Funds.

— Establishing a moratorium on major U.N. conferences after those planned for 1996.

— Abolish the Trusteeship Council as well as the General Assembly's ad hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and its information committee.

— Consolidate bodies dealing with technical and development assistance and emergency response into single agencies. Consider ending U.S. support for the Geneva-based U.N. Industrial Development Organisation, down-sizing regional economic commissions and modifying functions of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development.

Accord reached on global toxic waste ban

GENEVA (AP) — A ban on rich countries exporting toxic waste to the Third World was reinforced Friday by a global treaty.

A five-day meeting of members of the 1989 Basel Convention, which controls trade in hazardous waste, strengthened a voluntary export ban agreed to last year into a legally binding document.

The ban will be immediate and by January 1998 will include materials exported for recycling.

The agreement was a defeat for industrialists, who had lobbied hard for a softer approach that would have allowed export for recycling or separate bilateral agreements.

It was a victory, though, for environmental groups, who accused industrialists of trying to insert loopholes which would make the accord almost worthless.

"It is a significant, historic breakthrough," said Greenpeace campaigner Kevin Stairs.

"Finally the richest countries of the world will be forced to take responsibility for their own hazardous waste. They will have to look at their own industrial practices and improve their clean production techniques to ensure hazardous waste is not produced in the first place."

The consensus was passed with strong support from the European Union and many developing nations.

The United States, however, an observer at the conference, had argued that a ban on exporting for recycling would put more pressure on raw materials.

India, Australia, Canada and New Zealand also argued a blanket ban could be too far-reaching.

Industry representatives had called for a delay in the ban until full agreement on the term "hazardous" was reached. They feared it might be interpreted as including scrap metal or car and computer scrap.

Court overrules Mandela; local polls in turmoil

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Throwing upcoming local elections into turmoil, South Africa's new Constitutional Court ruled Friday that President Nelson Mandela exceeded his powers by decreeing electoral boundaries.

The ruling marked one of the biggest reversals for Mr. Mandela since his election as South Africa's first black president last year.

Mr. Mandela told a news conference he would seek a special parliament session to pass laws replacing the decrees wiped out by the court ruling, so that the local elections can be held on Nov. 1 as scheduled.

"Preparations for local government elections must continue so these elections can take place as planned," Mr. Mandela read from a statement. "The court's judgment does not create any crisis whatsoever."

Parliament's speaker said that the legislature could reconvene by Oct. 4.

The decision further confused an already chaotic attempt to hold voting for local leaders that will sweep away the last structures of white minority rule, completing the process that began with the landslide

victory of Mr. Mandela's African National Congress in last year's first all-race national election.

In its ruling Friday, the Constitutional Court struck down constituency boundaries Mr. Mandela had decreed in the Western Cape Province — one of only two provinces the ANC does not control.

Of more importance, the ruling applied to the entire country, meaning areas such as the violence-wracked Zulu homeland also faced confusion over whether voting could proceed as scheduled.

The court said parliament erred in passing a law giving the president powers to make decisions on the local government elections by decree. It gave parliament until Oct. 25 to adopt legislation that would validate boundaries for voting districts. Otherwise, the elections would not be allowed to proceed.

The ANC holds 62 per cent of the seats in parliament, giving it the power to pass legislation that requires a simple majority.

"It is important that the public should be aware that today's judgment is an invitation to government, and to

parliament, to follow a different process to attain the same substantive result," Mr. Mandela said.

Up to a dozen decrees would be affected, but the only one that seemed significant involved the election boundaries in Cape Town, the nation's second-largest city.

"The matter is clearly one of great urgency and parliament must decide without delay whether or not it wants an opportunity to correct the defect," Chief Justice Arthur Chaskalson said in his ruling.

Judge Chaskalson issued a mild rebuke to parliament and Mr. Mandela for passing and using the power of decree ruled unconstitutional.

"It is of crucial importance at this early stage of the development of our new constitutional order to establish respect for the principle that the constitution is supreme," the chief justice said in reading out part of his written judgment.

Mr. Mandela used the decree powers to overrule electoral boundaries drawn by the former white ruling National Party in the Western Cape. The National Party-dominated provincial

government then claimed that Mr. Mandela had abused his powers to favour the ANC.

The court unanimously decided the decree powers violated the interim constitution governing South Africa until a permanent document is in place by 1999. The judges ruled 9-2 that the decrees regarding the Western Cape boundaries were invalid.

The laws would, however, remain in force until Oct. 25 to give parliament time to "correct the defects," Judge Chaskalson said.

Western Cape Premier Hennie Kriel said he doubted if parliament could produce a constitutionally acceptable formula to enact Mr. Mandela's proclaimed boundaries.

"The law is clear regarding the powers of provinces," Mr. Kriel said. "If the ANC oversteps that line, we will not hesitate to act again."

Judge Chaskalson acknowledged the ruling "could lead to increased tension in areas where the inhabitants are anxious to democratise their local structures."

Investigators seek clues to AWACS crash that killed 24

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (R) — Investigators were searching for clues Saturday to what caused a U.S. Air Force surveillance plane to crash in a huge fireball soon after takeoff in Alaska, killing all 24 people on board.

It was the first time that an AWACS, which carry out radar reconnaissance and surveillance, has crashed since the huge planes entered service with the U.S. Air Force in 1977, providing vital battlefield support to U.S. forces around the world.

The four-engine planes, based on a Boeing 707 air frame, have been extremely reliable, military experts say.

Investigators were combing through the wreckage but had not yet found the "black box" cockpit recorder, which usually provide clues as to what happened in the last minutes before a crash.

Said Major Jerry Brown, spokesman for Elmendorf Air Force Base outside Anchorage.

The AWACS aircraft plunged to earth in an inaccessible, thickly-wooded area just three kilometres northeast of the runway minutes after taking off from Elmendorf on a routine training mission early Friday, officials said.

It exploded into flames, igniting 125,000 pounds (56,000 kg) of jet fuel on board and throwing debris over an area of several acres, they said.

The thick plume of black smoke from the crash site could be seen up to 50 kilometres away.

Rescue workers, who had to cut a path through the trees with a bulldozer, worked throughout the day to find victims.

By late in the day, they had recovered 22 bodies and two people were still missing but presumed dead.

"We are very sure there are no survivors," Maj. Brown said.

Twenty-two of the military personnel on board were Americans and two were Canadians, Maj. Brown said. Their names are not being released until their next-of-kin have been informed.

One witness said he saw fire shooting out of the plane's left engine just after it took off.

But Maj. Brown declined to speculate on the cause of the crash, saying that would not be known until a safety board, made up of military experts, had finished its report in about 30 days' time.

Patten urges U.K. to give H. Kong people right of abode

HONG KONG (AFP) — The British government should grant around 3.5 million Hong Kong residents the right of abode in Britain, according to the territory's Governor Chris Patten.

Talking in a British television network BBC panel programme recorded at his official residence in Hong Kong Mr. Patten said "I think those who qualified for a BDTIC (British Dependent Territory Citizen) passport or British passport should be qualifying for something, if necessary, give them the right of abode" in Britain.

"I think the British passport should be about more than helping you to travel comfortably around the world," he said in the programme aired here Saturday.

Mr. Patten dismissed arguments that such a scheme would lead to a flood of migrants to Britain following the handover of Hong Kong, one of Britain's last colonial outposts, to

China on June 30, 1997.

"I don't think the three million, or more than three million Hong Kong citizen, will suddenly arrive at Heathrow (Airport)."

Nobody seriously supposes that and, to be blunt, if they did, they certainly wouldn't be living on the welfare state," he said.

Some 3.5 million Hong Kong people, most born in the territory, hold either a BDTIC or British National (Overseas) Passport, but such documents deny the bearer the right to live and work in the United Kingdom.

The Dependent Territory Document will cease to be valid in July 1997, when Hong Kong will no longer be a British colony. But under a Sino-British agreement, the British National Overseas Passport will remain in force for travel abroad.

The other half of Hong Kong's six-million-plus residents get by with a Certificate of Identity (CI), which automatically ceases to be valid if the holder gets a new nationality.

World News



A FRIENDLY SALUTE: Belarus children of the Gomel region mimic a military salute as they give a friendly greeting to a group of newly arrived soldiers, who were dispatched to the area to help harvest the crops (AFP photo)

Beleaguered French government faces new pinpricks in parliament

PARIS (AFP) — Alain Juppé's beleaguered government faces new criticism from its own parliamentary benches from Sunday when former Prime Minister Edouard Balladur and his supporters win election to both houses of the National Assembly.

Mr. Balladur, who unsuccessfully challenged his rival in the neo-Gaullist Rally For the Republic (RPR) party, Jacques Chirac, for the presidency in the spring, is certain to win back the seat in the Chamber of Deputies he had to give up when he became prime minister in March 1993.

Many of the former members of his cabinet who backed him for president will be flanking Mr. Balladur in parliament, anxious to refute Mr. Juppé's charges that he took over a disastrous economic situation when appointed by Mr. Chirac in May.

Mr. Juppé served in the Balladur government as foreign minister and went along with its economic programme at the time, but stuck with Mr. Chirac when it came to the presidency and was rewarded with the premiership.

But since taking office both he and Mr. Chirac have plunged in the opinion polls, condemned for their apparent inability to resolve

France's economic and unemployment problems, and the decision to resume nuclear weapons tests.

Mr. Juppé was forced to admit this week that the tax cuts trumpeted by Mr. Chirac in his election campaign could not be delivered. His budget for next year will hit the saver as well as the consumer, while civil servants whose wages have been frozen are to strike next month.

The prime minister is also finding it impossible to shake off allegations that as a deputy mayor of Paris he gave his son a luxury flat at a reduced rent. Attempts by Justice Minister Jacques Toubon to sack a leading magistrate who has reportedly concluded there are grounds for prosecution have raised a new storm.

Apart from the second round of the by-elections involving Mr. Balladur and others, voting takes place Sunday for 117 seats in the Senate, the upper house of parliament.

Senators are elected for a nine-year term, with a third of the chamber being renewed every three years, by an Electoral College of 50,696 municipal and regional councillors.

Political heavyweights expected to gain seats include the blunt-speaking Charles Pasqua, interior minister under Mr. Balladur

Sri Lanka military silent on Jaffna campaign

COLOMBO (R) — The Sri Lankan army was silent on an expected offensive against Tamil rebels in the northern Jaffna peninsula Saturday, a day after the government clamped censorship on military news.

Defence spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe, who earlier promised to issue more frequent bulletins from the battlefield, said: "We can't say much when nothing is happening."

He denied the government was using the censorship to impose a news blackout on the army's campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against their northern Jaffna peninsula stronghold.

Asked about the expected offensive, he said: "We don't comment on these matters. We don't like our enemies to know our movements, or our intentions."

Sri Lanka imposed censorship on military news Friday, saying the move targeted news reports that hinder its efforts to tame Tamil rebels or demoralise troops fighting them.

An official statement Friday said: "The government had noted that certain newspapers and electronic media had published military-related news in an irresponsible manner during the past few months, threatening the security of the state and the people."

It said distribution of military news could demoralise the army.

The statement accused unidentified "newspapers and media institutions" of failing to respond positively to an earlier government plea for care in reporting military affairs.

"The government was reluctantly compelled to take this step," it added.

"We have nothing against the foreign media," Brig. Munasinghe said.

A spokesman for the censors counted five potential offences that journalists must be wary of.

They should not publish stories on military intelligence, about the movement of troops or army operations in the battlefields without the censors' approval, he said.

They should also desist from quoting unnamed sources and avoid reporting which could incite communal violence. It was not clear whether the last point preempted any comment on Colombo's recent political package to end the 12-year old ethnic war which has killed more than 50,000 people.

Major and Bruton mend fences after summit rift

ALCUDIA, Majorca (R) — British Prime Minister John Major and his Irish counterpart John Bruton have begun mending fences after a disagreement over guerrilla arms which scuppered a summit between them earlier this month.

But officials said Saturday the two still had some way to go before agreeing a new date for a summit to give impetus to the stalled Northern Irish peace process.

"We are looking at ways to progress," an Irish official said. "But I don't think we're putting dates on (a new) summit, which is a good indication."

The two leaders talked Friday at an informal summit of European leaders on the Mediterranean island of Majorca.

The face-to-face meeting was their first since Ireland called off talks between

Major and Bruton earlier this month after disagreements over Britain's stance on the arms issue.

That summit had been scheduled to announce the creation of an international commission to supervise the scrapping of arms held by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and their loyalist foes.

But Ireland backed out after Mr. Major refused to budge on his insistence that the Irish Republican Army had to give up its arms before Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, could enter all-party talks on the future of the British-ruled province.

As he went into the meeting Friday, Major told the BBC he was sticking to his hard line on arms.

"The blockage that needs to be overcome is to give confidence and belief to the people of Northern Ireland

that violence really is over, that the weapons really are no longer needed."

The only way in which that can credibly be done is for Sinn Fein to make it clear that they will begin to decommission their weapons," Mr. Major told the BBC as he arrived for the summit.

His remarks followed hard on the heels of a warning by Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams Friday that violence could resume in Northern Ireland after a year of peace unless Britain stopped linking peace talks to the surrender of guerrilla arms.

But David Trimble, leader of the biggest Protestant party, the Ulster Unionists, said in Belfast that Britain had to stand firm on its demands for the scrapping of guerrilla arms.

Officials said Saturday they did not expect a new summit date to come out of

the talks, but added they hoped to have some signs of progress.

Mr. Bruton said before he went into the talks that it was not just the two governments, but all parties involved, which had to shift their positions for the peace process to go forward.

Some commentators saw his remarks as an attempt to calm British concerns that Dublin had moved too close to Sinn Fein in its efforts to broker progress in the peace process, adding that this could herald a breakthrough.

Irish officials said Mr. Bruton was making every effort to put the peace talks back on track. But they said it was still too soon to talk of a breakthrough. "That's a little bit too rosy," one Irish official said.

India: U.S. move will fuel arms race in South Asia

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — The easing of U.S. congressional sanctions on Pakistan will fuel an arms race with India that neither country can afford, Indian officials and military experts said.

The government angrily protested against Thursday's vote in the U.S. Senate permitting resumption of arms sales to Pakistan. "The U.S. move would not be conducive to promoting peace, security and stability in South Asia," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Arif Khan.

A government-funded think-tank said the decision could set back India-U.S. relations, which have been improving steadily since the end of the cold war.

American arms sales have been blocked since 1990, after President George Bush could no longer certify that Pakistan was not building nuclear weapons.

Thursday's amendment was the first step towards reversing that.

On Thursday, the Senate voted 55-45 to ease the sanctions, overriding objections by senators who accused Pakistani officials of telling "lie after lie after lie" about their nuclear

weapons programme.

Pakistan has denied it possesses atomic weapons, but says it has the ability to manufacture them.

The sanctions blocked delivery of F-16 jet fighters that Pakistan had already bought. Islamabad will still not receive the F-16s, but it will get three P-3 Orion aircraft, missiles that can attack tanks and ships and an array of ammunition and spares for its U.S.-made equipment in its arsenal, experts said.

"The move calls for India to review its vulnerability," said C. Uday Bhaskar, a senior fellow of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, a government-funded organisation.

The sale of missiles and long-range naval reconnaissance aircraft to Pakistan will leave Indian tanks, naval bases and ships off the west coast vulnerable, Mr. Bhaskar said. The two neighbours have fought three wars.

"The military balance will change, but not in any manner that tilts it against India," said P.R. Chari, a defence expert at the Centre for Policy Research, an independent research organisation.

Under pressure to keep

down the federal deficit and to expand poverty-alleviation programmes, India has kept its defence spending at about \$6 billion for the past three years.

The last time India inducted new aircraft was in the mid-1980s when it acquired three squadrons of Soviet-built MiG-29s and two of the French-built Mirage-2000s. The navy also is operating an aging fleet and obsolete carriers.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman indicated that India would soon move to match the technological edge that the new weapons could give Pakistan.

"The government of India is committed to taking all necessary measures to counter the adverse effects on our security," Mr. Khan told reporters. He did not say whether that included developing nuclear weapons.

The move also meant that the United States accepts Pakistan's "clandestine acquisition of nuclear weapons," Mr. Khan said.

In Washington, the State Department Friday hailed the U.S. Senate vote easing a five-year ban on aid to Pakistan as evidence of "our commitment to a good and stable relationship with

Pakistan."

"We want to develop a much stronger ... and a more flexible relationship with Pakistan," department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

Asked to comment on an Indian government statement that the release could stimulate an arms race between the South Asian neighbours, Mr. Burns said "I assume" the American embassy in New Delhi had explained the situation to India.

Another State Department official, talking under rules of anonymity, said the United States had emphasised to Pakistan that support for the release was based on expectations that Pakistan would not substantially change the status quo in proliferation of nuclear missiles.

Noting that the one-time release will mean little change in India's regional military superiority, the official said the Clinton administration expects that India will "react responsibly" and recognise that relations with the United States can benefit both sides.

The House of Representatives has not yet acted on its version of the legislation.

O. J. Simpson case lawyers prepare for final arguments

LOS ANGELES (R) — Lawyers in the O.J. Simpson double-murder trial get down to the vital task Saturday of preparing closing arguments in a case that has riveted the nation's attention and provided an unprecedented television spectacular.

In behind-the-scenes activities that will neither be seen nor heard, prosecution and defence attorneys will prepare what could perhaps be the most important segment of the year-long marathon case.

The closing arguments were set to begin Tuesday, the anniversary of the start of the jury selection process on Sept. 26, 1994, with lead prosecutor Marcia Clark extolling the jury to find the football legend guilty in the gruesome murders of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman.

Simpson, who found later fame as a sportscaster and TV pitchman, has pleaded not guilty to the killings.

Ms. Clark was expected to tell the jury there was a "mountain of evidence" linking Simpson to the murders, including a trail of blood leading from outside Nicole Simpson's luxury condominium where the two were brutally stabbed to death on the night of July 12, 1994, to Simpson's mansion just three kilometres away.

Simpson's lead defence attorney, Johnnie Cochran,

was expected to counter the prosecution's attack by pointing to inconsistencies in the prosecution's approach, including the impeachment of key witness Mark Fuhrman, who testified to finding a bloody glove on Simpson's estate hours after the fatal attack.

Mr. Fuhrman stated under oath that he had not made any racial statements over the last 10 years, but the defence provided the jury with four witnesses who said he frequently used racial epithets aimed at blacks and Hispanics, and that he had a particular hatred of interracial couples.

Simpson is a black sports hero. Mr. Fuhrman is white, as were the victims.

Saturday's behind-closed-doors activities will follow a day of high drama in court Friday as Simpson was allowed to address the court, protesting his innocence while expressing the hope the trial would end soon.

Judge Lance Ito's decision to allow him to speak outside the presence of the jury was seen as "highly unusual" by legal analysts. Al Deblanc, a criminal defence attorney and analyst for KTLA television, said it was the first time he had seen it in 21 years of practice.

Simpson, dressed in a dark business suit, stood before Ito and said, in a voice filled with emotion and tears

welling in his eyes, "good morning, your honour. As much as I would like to address some of the misrepresentation made about myself and my — and Nicole concerning our life together, I am mindful of the mood and stamina of this jury."

"I have confidence ... that they will find as the record stands now that I did not, could not and would not have committed this crime."

"I have four kids, two kids I haven't seen in a year. They ask me every week, 'dad, how much longer?' I want this trial over. Thank you."

As Simpson mentioned his children, his eldest daughter, Arnelle, from his first marriage, broke down and sobbed quietly in the spectators' gallery.

Following his brief speech Simpson waived his right to testify and Defence Attorney Johnnie Cochran formally asked Judge Ito to dismiss the charges on the grounds the prosecution had failed to present sufficient evidence of guilt, a request Judge Ito denied.

The jury was then brought in and the prosecution and the defence officially rested their cases to the obvious relief of the jurors who had listened to 120 witnesses and seen hundreds of exhibits during almost nine months of testimony that began on Jan. 31. The jury has been sequestered since Jan. 11.

Perry urges reconciliation with former Soviet Bloc

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany (AP) — Preventing war depends on expanding alliances as well as deterrence, U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry told officers from former Warsaw Pact countries.

Speaking at a U.S.-funded academy for officers from Central and Eastern Europe, Mr. Perry described how American security strategy seeks to build on past successes and avoid past mistakes. Russia may be the key, he said.

"The cold war has ended, and once again the United States is reaching out to promote reconciliation with former adversaries of the cold war," Mr. Perry told the officers, who are learning the principles of civilian control of the military at the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies.

"Our goal is to prevent the seeds of conflict from sprouting anew," he said.

Mistakes that short-circuited international peace plans included the failure of the United States to join the League of Nations after World War I and the Soviet Union's refusal to participate in the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe after World War II, he said.

Today, Mr. Perry said, cooperation among old adversaries is essential as the world moves away from a security system based upon fear.

"The primary strategy for managing the danger of worldwide conflict has gone back from deterrence to prevention," Mr. Perry said.

Mr. Perry spoke at a centre named after the five-star general and secretary of state who developed the

plan to aid in Europe's rebuilding after World War II. He was addressing a graduating class of about 80 mid-level officers who will return to countries such as the Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Poland, having studied how a military functions in a democracy.

The speech marked the dedication of the Joseph J. Kruzel Auditorium at the centre. The room is named for Mr. Perry's top deputy on European security issues who was killed along with two other U.S. envoys when their armoured car plunged off the Mount Igman road outside of Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, on Aug. 19.

Mr. Perry stopped in this picturesque winter resort town at the end of a week-long trip that included meetings with defence officials in Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and

Hungary, all countries seeking to join the 16-nation NATO.

Mr. Perry cited U.S. aid to Russia for nuclear arms reduction, joint business ventures coordinated by Moscow and Washington, and friendships among U.S. and Russian officials as some of the elements of building a "pragmatic partnership" with America's former cold war foe.

But even if NATO expansion works perfectly and U.S.-Russian relations stabilise, Mr. Perry cautioned, regional wars and civil wars such as the Bosnian conflict cannot be prevented entirely.

"If we are unable to prevent regional conflict, then we must be able to deter it," Mr. Perry said.

Indonesian group: Military killed 16 civilians in Irian Jaya

JAKARTA (AP) — Indonesia's official human rights watchdog charged Friday that the military tortured and killed at least 16 civilians in the jungle region of Irian Jaya, including five near a U.S.-owned copper mine.

The charges by the National Commission on Human Rights followed two investigations in the remote area in August and September.

"We have concluded that between October 1994 and June 1995 ... there were violations of human rights in the form of indiscriminate

killings and torture," Marzuki Darusman, deputy chairman of the rights commission, told a news conference.

He said the military was also guilty of unlawful arrests, arbitrary detention, disappearances, excessive surveillance and destruction of property in the region.

Mr. Darusman said the 16 dead people included women and children, and that four others remained missing.

All of the human rights abuses were committed by the military in operations against rebels in the Free

Papua Movement and in maintaining security around a U.S.-owned mine in Timika, he said.

The Freeport Copper Mine, owned by Freeport-McMoran Copper and Gold Corp., "is described as a vital project," he said.

Five of the dead people were killed near the mine, he said. Their deaths have been linked to alleged attempts to expropriate land for the company's expansion.

Karel Phil Erari, a Protestant minister from Irian Jaya who was present at the news conference, said

he was satisfied with the commission's findings but believed that Freeport was involved in the killings.

Mr. Darusman said trucks and containers owned by Freeport were used in the arrests and killings of the civilians. But he said Freeport officials denied any involvement, saying they were unaware that their properties were being used.

The investigation was prompted by protests from civil liberties groups, which accused the army and Freeport of involvement in the killings.

Taste test finds new poisonous bird

PARIS (R) — A taste test of a new bird found it to be poisonous.

The bird was found in a forest in the north of France.

The taste test was conducted by a group of scientists.

The results of the test were published in a scientific journal.

The scientists concluded that the bird was indeed poisonous.

EU summit leaves Majorca tourists cold

ALCUDIA, Majorca (R) — Holidaymakers hoping to soak up the sun in Majorca gave a thumbs down to a summit of European Union leaders.

The summit was held in the town of Alcudia.

The tourists were disappointed that the summit was held in the middle of their holiday.

The summit was seen as a waste of time and money.

Jordan Times

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Mess without ethics

NOTHING IS more damaging to a free press than journalists who mislead the public through the publication of incorrect information to serve the interests of certain groups or individuals.

Professional newspapers take extra care and impose strict controls to ensure that nothing but correct and verified news is presented to the readers. But no controls are sufficient to guard against misleading the public if journalists themselves disregard their professional ethics in order to make financial or political gains.

Commitment to objectivity and accuracy in reporting news should be sacred to all journalists and news organisations. Not all journalists hold their mission sacred, however, nor do all newspapers succeed all the time in upholding the principles of good journalism.

The Jordanian press has been plagued, for sometime, with rumours that it has been penetrated by people who are in the profession solely to serve some foreign or local groups even if at the cost of objectivity, ethics and the national interests of the country. It is time that these rumours were dealt with.

The credibility of the whole Jordanian media could eventually become the doomed victim of these rumours. Consequently, the responsibility of finding out the truth about them is firstly and foremostly that of the journalists themselves. This is a responsibility that must be shouldered.

Jordanian news organisations should move to protect their credibility. That they can do by forming a committee that will conduct a thorough investigation of such reports as the one that was carried by Al Hayat newspaper on Wednesday. If it is proven that there are members of the profession whose loyalty is other than their professional ethics and their readers, proper action should be taken against them. The law and journalistic norms have prescribed enough ways for dealing with such journalists.

But if those who spread the rumours are found to have no proof to support their claims, they should be sued and fought collectively by every journalist and news organisation in the Kingdom. The credibility of the press takes years to build, but it takes a very short time to damage. Just as no corrupt journalist or group of journalists should be allowed to damage the reputation of the press, outsiders who level accusations without weighing their truths should learn that the press has teeth and can bite, either through the law or the power of information.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON the difficulties facing the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the implementation of the second phase of the Oslo agreement, Al Ra'i daily said the blame for these difficulties falls on the Israeli government. At the start of the negotiations the Israelis seemed uninterested in conducting serious talks and later, when pressed to pursue the negotiations, they resorted to the tactics of war rather than those of peace, said the paper. Citing the stepped up arbitrary measures against the residents of Hebron, Nablus, and other areas in the West Bank in addition to the Gaza Strip, the paper said that such behaviour clearly reflects the tendency towards perpetuating hostilities rather than accepting the idea of peace with the Palestinians. The kind of peace which Israel is imposing on the Palestinians through its negotiations demonstrates the Jewish state's formula which imposes capitulation on the Palestinians, and does not grant them sovereignty over their land, continued the daily. The paper said that Israel should comply with the rules of peace and renounce the rules of war, and should seek peace on all tracks so that peace can be comprehensive.

A WRITER in Al Ra'i said Jordan ought to benefit from advanced nations experience in matters related to higher education so as to solve the country's annual chronic problems related to university enrolment. Zeid Hamzeh said that universities in Europe and the United States are open to all students and they seldom face the problem which Jordan encounters every summer. For one thing, school graduates are allowed to continue their higher education while working and are provided with advanced technical and vocational training enabling them to work at various and different businesses, said the writer. Another and more important point, he said, is that the advanced nations do not face a population problem as the growth rate is almost zero, while in Jordan the annual increase in population stands at 3.4 per cent, which means a growth of 142,000 year alone. The increase in population, he added, has led to an increase in demand for university education. He said that partial solutions are of no use; and the country has to reach the roots of the problem if it really seeks a lasting solution.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

Census results must be revealed

A GENERAL census is supposed to be conducted in Jordan once every 10 years covering all aspects of the population and its activities. A census was thus due on 1989, but circumstances in that turbulent year and its economic and social troubles did not make it feasible. It was postponed for five years, until it was finally carried out last December.

The census of December 1994 was given the green light to go ahead after securing the necessary funding of around JD 3 million. For several weeks preceding the implementation date, the official media, especially Jordan Radio and Television, launched an extensive campaign aimed at promoting awareness of the value of accurate information being made available to decision makers, as a prerequisite for the success of economic and social planning, and for proper drawing of policies in both public and private sectors.

A few days after concluding the census, the Department of Statistics came up with some tentative results which indicated that the population of Jordan was slightly less than previously assumed. The overall figure was just below 4.1 million, of which around 3.8 million were Jordanians, while the remainder was made up of Arabs and foreign residents. The census did not include Jordanians living abroad except for students.

At the time, we expected more figures to be announced, although gradually. However, since then we have not heard from the Department of Statistics. This silence has given rise to rumours and speculations which could not be positive. People are asking: "Is there something to hide?"

The mere undertaking of the census, and the nature of the questions asked, had caused some fears among

Jordanian-Palestinians due to specific classification of refugees (1948) and displaced (1967). The blackout on the findings of the census, or the delay in revealing the final results, had caused worries on the part of the East Bank Jordanians as well. The Jordanian government thus was unsuccessful in scaring both groups, albeit for different reasons.

We appreciate the sensitive subject of determining the ratio of Jordanians according to origins, but since the census was actually performed, with a high cost of time, effort and money, it is not acceptable to keep the results in the files and to refrain from placing all the figures under the disposal of those who run the political, economic, and social aspects of the country. This would be like asking policy makers and businessmen to work in the darkness, or with their eyes closed.

Several weeks ago I asked the prime minister about the outcome of the census and the reasons for delay in announcing its findings. He seemed unconcerned about the whole operation. "The census was not done in my time" he answered. I also called on the director of the Department of Statistics, who confirmed that the classification and compilation were finished weeks ago. What is being done now is drawing samples for rechecking, to perfect the results and exclude the slightest clerical mistakes that may be committed. He adamantly refused to give me any figures until they are officially announced. No date was given for such an announcement, however.

Transparency, which is essential in democracy, requires that all the detailed outcome of the census be made public without further delay.

Stark economic choices facing the Gulf states

By Naomi Collett

IT WAS business as usual in the stock markets of the Gulf despite recent political upheavals. The dosing of the emir of Qatar by his son, Sheikh Hamad; a reshuffling of the beleaguered Bahraini cabinet in the wake of last year's dramatic riots and the removal of various key ministers in the Saudi cabinet certainly proved that — in the Middle East at least — a week is a long time in politics.

So far the changes have been greeted with enthusiasm as part of the region's ever continuing drive for modernisation. International and local dignitaries were not slow in voicing their support for the new-looking governments. In Qatar, the accession of Sheikh Hamad was welcomed as being long overdue. Once firmly established in Doha, the new emir made no secret of his determination to drag the economy into the 1990s and set about raising private sector funds for the government. A decree setting up a Doha Securities Market was immediately issued. And while the law stipulated that only equities and bonds of Qatari companies and treasury instruments issued by the government can be traded, the government is discussing kick starting the privatisation process by selling up to 30 per cent of its holdings in various profitable industries such as steel, refineries and petrochemicals. The possibility of trading in shares issued in the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, and so opening up the important Saudi market to local investors, is also under discussion.

In the Gulf banking centre of Bahrain, the political situation looks more murky with the Al Khalifa family coming under increasingly vociferous pressure from

the opposition movement to reinstate the 1973 constitution. But despite the longevity and passion of the pro-democracy riots which have surprised many, the stock market has remained immune to all ruptures on the political scene and, if foreign observers are to be believed, will continue to flourish. In fact the market picked up slightly after the cabinet reshuffle. As in Qatar, the new government has made much of its commitment to improving economic performance, in particular encouraging the growth of the private sector as a means of coping with Bahrain's rising unemployment. One member of the new cabinet was swift to point out that, "since the basic fundamentals for political, economic and social life have already been laid down... it is only natural for our country to start a new phase for the optimal rationalisation of state revenues and spending."

Across the causeway in Saudi Arabia, the mood is also positive. According to Basil Al Ghalayini, head of the London office of the International Investor — a Kuwait-based Islamic investment company — the country welcomes the changes. "It's time we had some new faces in the cabinet, and this is a very healthy change. It will definitely improve Saudi Arabia's image in the international arena." Mr. Ghalayini is similarly upbeat on the subject of privatisation. "The new cabinet will be keen to push through privatisation more quickly and so increase liquidity which has been one of the main problems of the Saudi stock market so far."

Of course this very public show of providing the local economies with a much needed kick start should not affect foreign buyers too much. Despite the relentless search of international fund managers for

high yields, so far the upsurge in private capital flows has largely passed the Gulf by. In fact the small amount of private capital attracted to the Middle East region as a whole contrasts unfavourably with the experience of East Asia and Latin America, as well as with the transitional economies of Eastern and Central Europe. While the main stock market in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, remains closed to outside investment, Kuwait, as the largest of the markets open to non-nationals, is dogged by its own problems. Earlier this year fears were expressed of a "fire sale" of private Kuwaiti assets destabilising the market as the government moved to recover part of the \$24 billion in private debts it took on after the 1982 local stock market crash. The debate in Kuwait's parliament over easing repayment terms still rages.

Can privatisation take off?

Aside from such worries, all stock markets in the region are blighted by more general problems such as the absence of indigenous clusters of competitive firms. Entrenched state control of industry and the tendency for family-owned enterprises to use banks as the primary source of financing so as to maintain complete control over decision-making means that markets across the region are extremely limited in capitalisation and liquidity. So far, only a pitifully estimated \$3 billion worth of assets have been sold, with Kuwait alone of the Gulf states making any significant sales. Again, any comparison with the newly initiated markets of Eastern Europe and South Asia reveals that local equity market capitalisation is minimal. The limited nature of the privatisation process means

that there is a large pent-up demand for shares from Gulf investors and nationals based abroad, witness the ferocious bidding by local financiers when shares in the National Industries Company were auctioned recently by the Kuwait Investment Authority.

Cynics have gone so far as to claim that privatisation will not take off in the Middle East until governments really feel the pinch. Claiming that the sole incentive for government sell-offs is the direction of oil prices, they cite the downward trend in oil prices and the undercutting of OPEC by non-members as providing the impetus for local governments' recent enthusiasm for relinquishing control of the economy. They also claim that the likelihood of the various projects earmarked for privatisation going ahead depends on the oil markets remaining depressed, and point out that given the absence of any ideological commitment to privatisation, it is not surprising that most governments have been dragging their heels.

A gloomy prognosis

If supply is beset by problems, then future demand is also less than promising. The Mexico crisis left a nasty taste in the collective mouth of fund managers and brought home the dangers of investing in exotic locations. Asked one fund manager, "Why should we risk the Middle East for dubious returns when there are markets closer to home with higher returns?" adding, "we are now more interested in getting the fundamentals right." And with fund managers' search for high yields giving way to an emphasis on quality, future prospects for the region look bleak. World Bank reports are less than enthusiastic about the long-

term growth prospects of the region. While Tunisia and Morocco are praised for progress on structural adjustment, the Gulf has been lambasted for its failure to get to grips with similar problems.

According to *The World Economy and Implications for the Middle East and North Africa Region, 1995-2010*, a paper sponsored by the World Bank, over the past decade real per capita GDP in the Middle East has fallen, representing the largest decline in any developing region with the exception of the transitional economies of Eastern Europe. The major reasons for this are given as adverse external factors such as falling oil prices, but slow progress in reforming public sectors and promoting private sector-led diversification are also blamed. One report warns that the region's GDP will need to advance by five per cent per year over the coming decade if it is to compensate for earlier declines in living standards and absorb new entrants to the labour force.

This division between the Gulf and other emerging economies is set to worsen. Speaking at the Oman Vision 2020 conference held by the ministry of development in June, the head of the Middle East and North Africa region at the World Bank, Mr. Caio Koch-Weser, stressed the underperformance of the Middle East economies as the liberalisation of trade and capital flows moves the world towards the globalisation of its economy. Other World Bank reports also warn that as market and products become more globalised and competition from Eastern Europe and Asia intensifies, the region risks "finding itself increasingly marginalised."

One major target for economist wrath is the public sector which is seen as

being responsible for stifling efficiency and initiative. But here the line between economic necessity and political considerations becomes blurred, as increased political tensions make governments reluctant to either reduce their commitment to the public sector, which remains responsible for the bulk of employment, or end the generous subsidies for GCC nationals. As a result, there is little evidence of any plans to sell off typical privatisation favourites such as utilities. It is also for this and the more ominous reason of keeping a tight control over domestic security that the telecommunications industry — a hot favourite for privatisation in other emerging economies — remains firmly in government hands.

Nevertheless many in the region are optimistic about future prospects for privatisation, seeing it as a means of reversing the region's historical tendency towards capital flight. Kuwait's Finance Minister Nasir Al Rodhan has announced that his government is going ahead with the privatisation programme it drew up as a five-year plan last year. "If matters on the market proceed as they are doing now, then we shall accomplish the programme in less than the time fixed for the privatisation plan," he said. Others describe the need to privatise more bluntly. One fund manager, recalling that Dr. Alfredo Parra — the former Venezuelan minister of energy — warned that GCC governments no longer control oil prices, said, "the world is becoming a harsher place for the GCC. They don't have the income from oil they once had, and the merging economies are leaving them for dead. They have no choice but to privatise."

Middle East International

In shadow of wars, mediation corps winning some for peace

By Charles J. Hanley
The Associated Press

THE GUYS with the guns get on prime time. But Amhadou Abdullah and Mohammad Sahnoun are winning battles too — quiet, back-page victories for peace in a warlords' world.

As the bloody 1990s wear on, Sahnoun, Abdullah and other specialists in international "preventive diplomacy" are fanning out to trouble spots early, to reason, cajole and pressure, to try to keep the map from growing bloodier still.

Jimmy Carter is the best-known of these peacemakers, a veteran of Haiti and North Korea who last week launched a Cuba mediation effort. But more obscure envoys are taking on challenges just as explosive as those the ex-president tries to defuse.

In just three years, the new U.N. Department of Political Affairs has become the hub for a platoon of globe-trotting conciliators. Unofficial mediators are proliferating, too: One list counts two dozen groups

dedicated to international conflict prevention, from Mr. Carter's high-powered international negotiation network down to church organisations.

Like so much else in today's world, the growth in preventive diplomacy began with the cold war's end.

For decades, U.S. and Soviet diplomats did the preventive work, stoking and cooling world hot spots to suit their needs. When superpower rivalry faded but small-scale conflict did not, a law of diplomatic supply and demand kicked in: Secretary General Boutros Ghali rushed to fill the gap, establishing political affairs and declaring preventive diplomacy "the most important issue facing us today."

His and other mediators, though often overshadowed by such debacles as Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda, have logged thousands of miles and a growing list of successes.

Just this month, U.N. envoy Cyrus Vance, former U.S. secretary of state, brokered a deal easing tensions between the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia

and its neighbour Greece. On Macedonia's northern border, U.S. and other troops are "preventively" deployed under the U.N. flag to guard against a spillover of ethnic violence from Serbia.

In Burundi, Central Africa, where Hutu-Tutsi violence threatens to explode into genocide like Rwanda's, Mauritania has won the trust of all sides as its eight-member U.N. team has helped keep the lid on for the past 22 months.

In Congo in 1993, Sahnoun, an Algerian diplomat dispatched by the Organisation of African Unity, helped avert an ethnic war over disputed election results.

That same year, the Secretary General of the Organisation of American States, Joao Baena Soares, flew to Guatemala and helped peacefully undo an anti-democratic coup.

Quiet backroom diplomacy by U.N. officials, also in 1993, led Estonian and Russian leaders to back down at the 11th hour in a dangerous face-off over Russian minority rights in



the Baltic state.

A scholar of preventive diplomacy, Michael S. Lund, said Estonia showed the effectiveness of the diplomatic full-court press: Mr. Carter, U.S. senators, European envoys all communicated their concerns to the two sides.

"When you have a critical mass of outside parties like that, all wanting a peaceful resolution, it seems to weigh in as a kind of pressure on the parties to work it out," said Mr. Lund, of Washington's U.S. Institute of Peace.

Another winning ingredient: the ability big powers have, and through them the United Nations, to threaten sanctions or promise financial aid to keep a costly war from breaking out.

The experts' next candidate for a full-court press: Nigeria, where the military keeps democracy shackled. Sceptics say preventive diplomacy is being oversold. The hard cases will simply not submit, says Stephen John Stedman, an Africa specialist at Johns Hopkins University. The humanitarian

tragedies of today were caused mainly by leaders who were interested in neither reaching nonviolent resolutions to conflicts nor making concessions," Mr. Stedman wrote recently.

But some sceptics may be coming around. The Wall Street Journal's conservative editorial page last week noted that "we generally frown" on international mediation, but went on to suggest the time has come to try the U.N. hand at breaking the Indian-Pakistan impasse over Kashmir.

Features

Police get tough with UAE's bad drivers

By Michael Georgy Reuters

ABU DHABI — Police guard Mohammed Taleb eyed rows of nervous prisoners swept up in a mounting crackdown on the number one killer in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"We show them pictures of fatal accidents to frighten them. Those who cause injuries stay in prison as long as their victims are in hospital," he said, pointing to large photographs of wrecked cars.

It could be worse — a flogging for some — as the authorities in this Gulf Arab state get tough with the legions of reckless drivers who contribute to one of

the world's highest traffic death rates.

Last year alone there were more than 600 road deaths, over 6,000 injuries and nearly 16,000 car accidents in a land of only two million people where highways have speed bumps and driving tests can take years to pass.

Ras Al Khaimah, one of the seven emirates in the UAE federation, has already resorted to hardline measures to deter reckless driving.

Two youths were caned 30 times each last month before 2,000 people at the spot where they caused a fatal accident.

"Some people listen and others don't," said Colonel

Mohammad Sameh, the UAE's director-general of traffic.

"Those who are not willing and cause traffic deaths should be flogged. If it works in Ras Al Khaimah we will start flogging people across the country."

At the Abu Dhabi Traffic Department, the fervour of the nationwide safety drive is palpable.

An imposing green sign that reads "speed kills" in English and Arabic greets visitors in the car park.

Inside, colourful charts displaying the number of accidents per week, month and hour hang in offices as experts analyse the latest collision patterns.

Weekly lectures are deli-

vered to hundreds of bus and taxi drivers as well as teenagers. Motorists who seem unfit for the hazardous roads are given psychological tests.

And everyone is reminded that causing a deadly accident is punishable by up to three years behind bars.

Captain Said Al Matroushi, the chief accident investigator, sits at his desk as traffic violators stream into his office describing their side of the story.

One man walked in with a badly bruised face after the traffic court upstairs refused to deal with his case without proper documents.

"I can't get the papers, they were covered with

blood in the accident," he pleaded. But Mr. Matroushi would not relent.

The authorities are also delivering the safety message on television and radio programmes and in newspapers.

Police express rising frustration and many fear the toll of death and injury will only climb.

The leading road predators — brazen teenagers armed with powerful cars, oil money and idle time — seem oblivious to the safety message, police say.

Every night scores of young men in flowing white robes with one hand on the steering wheel and the other on a mobile phone hit

the streets in sleek limousines and thunderous four-wheel drive vehicles.

Interior Ministry officials say those too young to drive legally are sometimes given the keys to their parents' cars.

"At night I try to stay off the roads. These kids try to swerve into my car and scare me for kicks," a taxi driver complained.

The crackdown has even nettled foreigners visiting the UAE for a good time.

"Get me a neckbrace," said Omani tourist Mahmoud Ali, facing the prospects of 80 lashes in addition to his whiplash, just before being locked up for drunk driving.

A timely contribution to debate on role of religion

BOOK REVIEW

Christianity In The Arab World
By Hassan Bin Tatal, Crown Prince of Jordan
Amman, Royal Institute of Inter-Faith Studies, 1994, 120 pages.

This book is a timely and welcome contribution to the dialogue going on in almost all societies of the world, about the place of religion in life. It is the more pertinent inasmuch as it comes at a time when tension between Islam and the Christian West is rising while at the same time search for in-depth analyses goes on, regarding, not only the roots of the tension, but ways and means to contain and eventually overcome it. Momentarily searching for a modus vivendi for coexistence, some attempts, as in the work under consideration, are reaching out for positive cooperation.

It was in Jordan, and to the credit of His Majesty King Hussein and his brother Crown Prince Hassan that the concept of dialogue between the three monotheistic Abrahamic religions came into being. Christianity In The Arab World is a serious and sensitive work on a subject hitherto only sporadically addressed. While Western scholarship is either unaware, uninterested, or deliberately ignores the topic, Arab scholars, Christian and Muslim, are busy with what they consider more immediate concerns, shying away from the topic or discussing it in hushed voices.

Furthermore, the real, imagined, or trumped-up fixation with the so-called "Islamic" "fundamentalist" "terror" has tended to derail any serious consideration or scholarship on some of the real issues that have been the cause for tension in the relationship between the two great cultures of Islam and the West.

Prince Hassan's contribution is a rare and welcome one in that it objectively asks not only what is Christianity from a Muslim Arab perspective, but implicitly recognises Christianity as a powerful current in the great river that is the Arab-Muslim civilisation. Gently and compassionately touching and discussing hitherto untouchable issues, it lays before the eye and the imagination of the reader, the story of Arab Christianity in such a way as to capture the essence of the matter.

By taking on himself the noble task of reconciling the three religions, the Hashemite Prince, the fortieth direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammad (May Peace Be Upon Him) has been faithful to the expectation and responsibility of his noble ancestry. His research is thorough and meticulous. His vibrant description of the tortuous rise and labyrinthine discussion of Christian beliefs, often verging on hairsplitting arguments between the various schools of thought and dogma is matched by a depth of analysis worthy of devoted scholars.

Gently, the author is drawing the attention of the world to the fact that there are Christians in the Arab World; and that while the Western world seems to be opening up its heart, pouring its sympathy and resources in support of the Jews, the Arab Christians have something to say too.

Concerning the origins of the Nicene Creed, the Christological controversies, or the Iconoclast controversy, his discussion presents the reader with a rare understanding of these complicated issues. The Chart on page 99 on the principal Christian confessions and churches, graphically clarifies the relationship between the various historical dogmas, beliefs and creeds.

Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of the book is that it can be read by the layman and the scholar, benefiting each, with a wealth of knowledge that far exceeds its one hundred or so pages.

The future of Christian Arabs is presented not only with lucidity but a historical vision as well. "Much concern about the future of the Christian Arabs is currently being expressed among Christians inside the Arab World, particularly in connection with the waves of Islamic fundamentalism... people who entertain such concern or fear rarely take into account that it is in the nature of waves... to subside once they have consumed their initial driving force especially in the case of waves of social behaviour driven by ephemeral emotion rather than by solid reason. The fact remains that the Christian Arabs are in no way aliens to Muslim Arab society," the Prince writes.

In earlier as well as in modern times, the Christian Arabs considered themselves; over and above all, as part and parcel of the great culture of Islam. Their relationship with God notwithstanding; their pride in being then and now Arab patriots remains boundless. Their language, customs, mores, culture, social relationships and manners are patently and clearly of Muslim orientation. The hero of the Christian Arab is Muslim: Omar Ibn Al Khattab, Ga'far Al Tayyar, Khalid Ibn Al Walid, Salah Al Din Al Ayubi... etc, to name but a few.

In tracing the intricacies of the various schools of thought, the author is also recognising the vital role of the Christian Arabs in the history and development of the area. The survival of the Christians over the centuries must also be considered as yet another achievement of the tolerant, really accepting great mosaic culture of Islam.

Definitely a major contribution to the dialogue between religions, cultures and civilisations, the book attests to the fact that the author's theology is as well-honed and sensitive as his political acumen.

Prof. Kamel S. Abu Jaber

Syria opens its touristic treasures

By Kinda Jayoush Reuters

DAMASCUS — Cleopatra reputedly used to stroll a wide, colonnaded path here and archaeologists dug the world's oldest recorded alphabet out of Syrian sands.

Now modern-day visitors are coming in record numbers to a country that has long been at the crossroads of civilisation but until recently was off the beaten tourist track.

"Syria with its rich history and nature has all that a tourist would like to see. There is the mountain, the desert, the coast and the valley in addition to the archaeological places," Tourism Minister Amin Abul Shamah told Reuters.

Tourism in nearby countries like Turkey, Israel and Egypt has been going through hard times as a result of an increase in violence.

Such violence, however, has not recently affected Syria whose President Hafez Assad keeps a tight rein on domestic affairs.

"We were astonished at the big increase of tourists coming to Syria this year, but we think that safety and security made Syria an attractive centre," Abul Shamah said.

He said the government attached enormous importance to the tourism industry to play a greater role in the national economy, even though it now accounts for only some seven per cent of

gross domestic product.

Income from tourism in 1994 was around \$850 million but Mr. Abul Shamah said the target was to double this within five years.

He added that Syria was expecting to receive more than four million tourists in the year 2000, up from around two million in 1994.

"We have now 65,000 hotel rooms and we hope to increase the number to over 140,000 rooms in the year 2000 including 20,000 rooms by the side of the Assad Lake (on the Euphrates river in the north-east)," Abdul Muain Maleh, planning director at the ministry of tourism said.

Mr. Abul Shamah said more than \$1 billion would be invested by the government and the private sector to

build new hotels and other tourist facilities during the next five years.

More than \$900 million was spent during the last year on new hotels, he said.

What the tourists get for their travel dollars is a chance to visit and ogle some of the marvels of the Middle East.

One of the most impressive is the looming bulk of the Crac de Chevalier crusader castle, built on a craggy mountaintop in western Syria by the Europeans who came here to vanquish Islam.

In the coastal city of Latakia in the north, near Aleppo, the world's most ancient recorded alphabet — the 30-letter Ugarit dating to the 14th century BC

— was found.

The ancient city of Bosra, some 100 km south of Damascus, has a Roman theatre which seats up to 15,000 people.

In the desert northeast of Damascus stand the vast ruins of Palmyra, whose Queen Zenobia built it into a powerful trading centre but whose lack of fealty angered Rome which partly destroyed it in AD 272.

Another powerful woman of ancient times, Cleopatra, reputedly strolled the colonnaded path in the ancient city of Apamea, north of Palmyra, where a major restoration is under way.

Syrian officials think that more people are being lured to Syria — to sample

its fine Middle Eastern cuisine and buy rugs in its famous souks (markets) as well as see the historic sites — in part because of satellite broadcast beamed throughout the Middle East.

"Syria's satellite channel which produced several programmes about Syria's tourist sites had contributed, in addition to other elements, to this big boost," Mr. Abul Shamah said.

But in the end, Syria is the best advertisement for itself. Tourism officials noted that an exhibition of Syrian artefacts that was supposed to be on display for about a month in Paris and Rome, was so popular it stayed for six.

King leaves for France today

(Continued from page 1)

Monetary Fund (IMF).

In one of its rare gestures to a Third World country, the World Bank offered itself as guarantor for \$50 million in seven-year bonds that Jordan issued this month to help the Kingdom's projects in the telecommunications sector.

The King will be accompanied by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Foreign

Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Finance Minister Basel Jarrah, Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and Planning Minister Rima Khalaf.

While in the U.S. some of the ministers will also attend meetings of the working groups of the multilateral phase of the Middle East peace process and streamline issues that are expected to be

discussed and finalised at the MENA summit. These include the establishment of a Middle East development bank and regional tourism and businessmen's councils.

Finance Minister Jarrah is also expected to sign an agreement with the U.S. government under which Washington is writing off more than \$400 million in Jordan's debts.

But we believe in all honesty that the Jordanian agreement (with Israel) is in the interest of the peace process and helps to support the Syrian negotiator," he added.

Syria, which is far behind Jordan and the Palestinians in its own peace talks with Israel, opposes rapid normalisation with the Jewish state.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad has also shown signs of pique at Jordan's decision to grant political asylum to the prominent sons-in-law of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

In Cairo last Thursday, Mr. Kabariti noted that other Arab states had also given refuge to Iraqi dissidents, he specifically mentioned Iraqis who have been in Syria.

"I believe there is a double standard. There is a kind of hypocrisy and duplicity in the political dialogue," he said.

Kabariti to meet Sabah at U.N.

(Continued from page 1)

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal would visit Amman sometime in October after the U.S. meetings in New York. It would be his first to Amman since the Gulf crisis.

Mr. Kabariti went to Riyadh twice over the past two months as part of efforts to mend fences.

In comments published Saturday Mr. Kabariti blamed Syria for a deterioration in relations, saying there is no justification for Syrian concerns about Jordanian foreign policy.

Mr. Kabariti, in an interview published in the Al Hayat Arabic daily, said that on the contrary peace between Jordan and Israel should strengthen Syria's

own negotiating position.

"I do not deny that there really is a summer cloud (in relations). It has gone on some time and it has now entered the autumn season but we are trying with all seriousness to restore relations to what they should be," he said.

Asked what was behind the deterioration, he said: "That question must be put to the Syrians. As for us, we see no justifications or reasons for any conflict with Syria."

"It seems that Jordan reaching a balanced agreement which ensures Jordanian interests, before an Israeli-Syrian agreement was reached, has aroused some concerns and might have aroused some sensitive feelings on the Syrian side."

conflict have created "a real chance for peace" that must be seized.

But Mr. Clinton, in his weekly radio address, said many obstacles remained to a diplomatic settlement in the Balkans and maintained that more NATO air raids were possible if the Bosnian Serbs resume attacks on U.N.-declared safe areas.

"Thanks to a combination of military muscle and diplomatic determination, there is now a real chance for peace in Bosnia. We must seize it," Mr. Clinton said.

Mr. Clinton said he had instructed U.S. negotiators to "push the peace process forward" at talks in New York starting Tuesday with the foreign ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia.

"Then I've asked them to return to the region... to keep the parties focused on an overall settlement," Mr. Clinton added.

"There's no guarantee that we can reach a settlement. There are still deep, deep divisions among the parties. But there has been genuine progress."

"We will spare no effort to find a peaceful solution, and we will work with NATO to implement a settlement once the parties reach it," the president said.

Serbs retake part of territory

(Continued from page 1)

"Our expert teams are working on that and I am sure they will make their findings public," he said. Mr. Stizdzic, who arrived in Zagreb on Friday from north-western Bosnia, gave no further details.

Bosnia's Muslim-led government tried on Friday to dictate ceasefire terms to end the 3½ year war, telling the Serbs to give up control of Banja Luka where authorities said 124 people, mostly elderly and sick, had died from exposure and lack of medicine.

This could not be independently confirmed but international aid workers described the situation as catastrophic.

Some 100 kilometres to the east in the embattled town of Doboj, Serbs expelled up to 480 Muslims into government-held territory, a U.N. aid official reported.

Kris Janowski, Sarajevo spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said some, including women, were beaten and robbed before being forced to walk 22-kilometre at night to safety.

The European Union repeated a call for an immediate end to hostilities near

Sarajevo and truce to follow in entire Bosnia.

But Bosnian Serb leaders vowed to recapture lost territory and Bosnian mainly-Muslim leaders set conditions for the ceasefire which were unacceptable for the Serbs.

Bosnia's President Alija Izetbegovic called on the Serbs to demilitarise Banja Luka where Serbs have shored up defences.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Sacirbey demanded the Serbs completely lift the siege of Sarajevo and open a secure road to the surrounded Muslim enclave of Gorazde in eastern Bosnia.

The success of the Muslim-Croat offensive means that actual control of land is now close to the 49-51 per cent division on which international peace efforts are predicated.

The next round of diplomatic bargaining over Bosnia's future is due to take place in New York next Tuesday when the foreign ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and rump Yugoslavia, speaking for the Bosnian Serbs, will meet U.S. and European Union mediators.

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1 in four Iraqis at risk

(Continued from page 1)

opposition groups since the end of the Gulf war in 1991.

"Freedom of expression and opinion" in this region cannot be guaranteed, Mr. Khadduri said.

Kurdish opposition groups took control of the area in 1991 after Britain, France and the United States imposed an air exclusion zone on northern Iraq, offering them protection against Baghdad.

Baghdad announced on Sept. 7 that a presidential referendum would be held on renewing the mandate of Saddam Hussein for a further seven years. Iraq said it

would invite 10,000 foreign observers to the unprecedented referendum.

Iraqi opposition leaders Jalal Talabani and Ayatollah Mohammad Bakir Hakim have held talks in the Iranian capital on the situation in their country and efforts to unite the opposition.

The Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) said its leader, Sheikh Hakim, met on Friday with Mr. Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

They discussed "latest developments in Iraq and the isolation and falling apart of the regime" in Baghdad, it said.

They also reviewed ways to "unite the opposition and spread resistance to rid the Iraqi people" of President Saddam and "return peace and security" to Iraqi Kurdistan.

Mr. Talabani's rival, Masoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), also travelled to Iran last Sunday and met President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, following a breakdown in U.S. efforts to secure a PUK-KDP peace deal.

The two factions, which jointly control northern Iraq, agreed to a ceasefire in August but have yet to implement a deal aimed at ending a conflict that has cost more than 2,000 lives since May 1994.

Old controversy resurfaces

(Continued from page 1)

brother and their two wives, both daughters of President Saddam Hussein in August.

"Iraqi institutions are trying to recruit Jordanian journalists and writers and working on winning over all forces that support the Iraqi regime by giving money, gifts or paying direct salaries," Mr. Ne'matt had reported, quoting official sources.

"We will go to court to find out who these Iraqi institutions are," Mr. Masarweh said in his column.

"As Jordanian citizens in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan we demand of Al

Hayat to tell us who are these Iraqi institutions that want to win support for the Iraqi regime by doling out money and gifts."

But over and above his obvious anger at Mr. Ne'matt's implication of journalists in Jordan through Al Hayat report, Mr. Masarweh also took offence at the report's claim that companies were created in Jordan as a front "to actively work for the benefit of Iraqi officials."

"As Jordanian citizens who are concerned over the sovereignty of this country, we demand of Al Hayat to reveal the names of these front companies. It is our right and the right of the Ministry of Trade and Industry to know about them."

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Taliban night attacks foiled

(Continued from page 12)

"This is a serious threat to Dostum," stated Abdullah.

On the reported new alliance between Mr. Masoud and General Dostum, Abdullah said there were contracts with the aim of stopping fighting in the north but as yet there was no positive result.

He said pro-Rabbani forces still controlled Chakhcharan, the capital of Ghor province, after re-capturing it from the Taliban last week.

Abdullah said the Taliban posed no military threat to the eastern provincial capital Jalalabad, whose shooro or ruling council was — despite rumours to the contrary — still "on side with Kabul."

He said the crew of an Ariana Afghan Airlines cargo jet hijacked by the Taliban Thursday and forced to land at Kandahar airport, had been released Saturday. He gave no details.

Clerics demonstrate

About 1,000 mullahs and Islamic students accused neighbouring Pakistan on Saturday of interference in Afghanistan when they delivered a protest memorandum to the United Nations office in Kabul.

In an officially organised demonstration, they marched through the city carrying anti-Pakistan banners and chanting slogans against Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) network.

"Death to the leaders of Pakistan," bellowed the march organisers on their way to the U.N. Office of the Secretary General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (OSGAP). "Death to ISI," and "Down with Benazir," they chanted.

The slogans referred Kabul's charges, which Pakistan denies, that the ISI had used the Taliban as a screen to hide what amounts to an invasion of the western provinces of Afghanistan.

The Religious Affairs Ministry organised the protest as a vehicle to carry to the OSGAP the 10-point memorandum, which called on the United Nations to send observers to monitor Afghan borders to evaluate and prevent foreign intervention.

"We the clerics and ulama support the neutral and benevolent offices of the United Nations and those so-called Taliban who are ISI's representatives refute the U.N. good offices," the resolution said.

"In reality these sort of Taliban are not from the Afghan nation," it said. "We condemn the actions of ISI and its so-called Taliban."

We are on the side of the armed forces of the country and we will defend every inch of our country."

Israel, PLO on verge of deal

(Continued from page 1)

the signing of the West Bank accord and another 1,000 on the eve of elections.

The Palestinians demand that all detainees be released, but Israel said it will not free those convicted of killing Israelis.

Abu Medein, the Palestinian justice minister, also said the Palestinians were not yet satisfied with all the arrangements for Hebron.

Another unresolved issue, left over from last year's talks on the first stage of autonomy, is the size of the PLO-run West Bank enclave of Jericho.

Officials have said that if the agreement is concluded Saturday, the two sides could formally sign it at the White House on Thursday.

Save water...Every drop counts

Asia sees dollar volatile but strengthening

HONG KONG (R) — The dollar looks likely to stay volatile against the yen in the short term, but the overall trend towards a weaker yen bodes well for most Asian nations, analysts in the region said Friday.

The dollar's roller-coaster ride up to 104.70 yen, the plunge down to 97.10 and then the partial recovery to around the psychological 100 yen mark in the past three days is part of a process which is likely to continue, they said.

"I think it will be a while until this volatility goes away," said Stephen Roberts, the chief economist at UBS Australia in Sydney. "You can keep intervening on the foreign exchange market and, slowly but surely, they can probably work the yen to a better level, but that is going to be a very volatile process," he said.

Analysts said Japan's announcement of a 14.22 trillion yen (\$136 billion) economic stimulus package Wednesday was the trigger for the volatility, with the dollar rising to 104.70 yen in anticipation on Tuesday evening in New York.

But the dollar began sliding after the announcement of the package, as the Bank of Japan (BOJ) did not follow up with strong intervention, they said.

Still, the dollar has strengthened considerably since it bottomed out at 79.75 yen on April 19. Analysts said the trend towards a stronger dollar appears to be on course despite the volatility.

"Fundamentally, the strong dollar trend hasn't changed, 110 yen isn't out of the question, but it will take quite a bit of time," said Manabu Nakagawa, investment banking director at Bank of Nova Scotia in Tokyo.

And that is good news for many Asian nations which have debt denominated in yen and reserves heavy in dollars.

An economist with the People's Bank of China, the central bank, said that when the yen rose it pushed up the cost of China's debt repayments to the Japanese government and Japanese banks. "So the fall means a cut in the amount of repayment, but the level of the yen is still comparatively high," said the economist, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Most of China's foreign exchange reserves are in U.S. dollars, despite an increasing diversification because of the fall of the dollar earlier this year. At the end

of June, the reserves had reached \$62.6 billion, official figures show.

The Philippine central bank said the depreciation of the yen had reduced the dollar value of the country's foreign debt by \$3.4 billion to \$11.68 billion on Sept. 19 from \$15.08 billion on April 19, when the yen peaked against the dollar.

About 30 per cent of the country's foreign debt is denominated in yen. But Liza Laig, an economist at the private Centre for Research and Communication, said that would not boost foreign exchange reserves since loans denominated in yen would not actually be repaid for a number of years.

"There's no immediate effect on our international reserves, since most of them have medium to long-term maturity," Ms. Laig said.

Sudrajat Djwandono, Indonesia's central bank governor, said at a parliament hearing Thursday that the yen's slide against the dollar was a positive development for the country, which has an estimated foreign debt of \$100 billion.

But the strengthening of the dollar against the yen also causes it to rise against the rupiah.

"The market is psychological and seasonal. We have to know what the season now is," said Fardi Kendy, treasury head of Mitsubishi Buana Bank in Jakarta.

Economists in Kuala Lumpur said the falling Japanese currency will relieve some pressure on Malaysia's burgeoning current account deficit, which has heightened fears of an overheating economy.

Japan is Malaysia's biggest trading partner, accounting for 26.7 per cent of its total imports of 156 billion ringgit (\$62.4 billion) in 1994, the economists said.

In Europe, German and French central bank chiefs fought to shore up the flagging dollar Friday and undo damage done by German Finance Minister Theo Waigel in casting doubt on Europe's plans for a single currency.

Bundesbank President Hans Tietmeyer said he considered foreign exchange market movements of the last few days as clearly exaggerated. The dollar, which shed as much as five per cent of its value against the mark in two days, was undervalued, he said.

"I see no change in fundamental economic data compared to recent weeks," a Bundesbank spokesman quoted Mr. Tietmeyer as saying in an interview with a

news agency.

"The dollar seems to me to be clearly undervalued at present," the spokesman quoted Mr. Tietmeyer as saying.

Bank of France President Jean-Claude Trichet said late Thursday in Frankfurt the U.S. dollar still had strong potential to rise against the mark and other currencies.

Mr. Waigel unleashed political outrage and market turmoil Wednesday when he was reported telling a parliamentary committee that Italy would be unable to whip its finances into shape in time to be among the first countries adopting a single European currency.

The comments, from a parliamentary summary which Mr. Waigel said was unauthorised, sent the lira as well as the dollar tumbling and threw European bond markets into turmoil.

Mr. Waigel, who would neither deny nor confirm making the comments, tried Friday to make good by lending

his hand to repairing the damage.

"I'm quite sure that the furore which arose from the somewhat unfortunate information policy of the parliament — not the government — will subside," Mr. Waigel said.

The Bundesbank, seen as displeased by the dollar's sudden plunge, lost no time in coming to the dollar's rescue.

"I'm convinced that the markets will soon return to a more appropriate valuation," the spokesman cited Mr. Tietmeyer as saying.

Economists said the Bundesbank was undoubtedly better served by a dollar nearer 1.50 marks, where it started the week, than near 1.40.

The dollar was just above 1.42 marks by the middle of the European day on Friday.

"Tietmeyer is trying, specifically with dollar/mark, to repair this drop," said Thomas Mayer, an economist at Goldman Sachs in Frankfurt. "The Bundesbank would

certainly like to have the dollar higher — probably where it was before this drop, near 1.50."

The Bundesbank has little to fear from a slight strengthening of the dollar given the mild inflation outlook in Germany. A stronger dollar would alleviate pressure on German exporters, economists said.

France's Trichet took a similar tack, saying: "I see the U.S. dollar still has potential against the yen and the European currencies."

But Mr. Trichet stuck by Germany in reinforcing the importance of strict compliance with the Maastricht treaty, which lays down economic criteria that EU countries must meet before they can participate in a single currency by 1999.

"I share the view that it would not be appropriate for economies that are not prepared to enter EMU (economic and monetary union)," Mr. Trichet said, referring to the start of the project.

Report: Up to 145m Asian, Indian children forced into slave labour

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — More than 100 million Asian and Indian children — some as young as four years old — are trapped and tortured, making products for Western consumers, an Australian anti-slavery group has said.

The Anti-Slavery Society said that between 104 million and 146 million children, most in India, are making car parts, jewelry, clothing, toys, food, fireworks, chemicals and other goods under appalling conditions.

"The punishments meted out to these children by their owners defy description," said Paul Bravender-Coyle, spokesman for the Melbourne-based group. "They have been burned, branded with red-hot irons, starved, whipped, chained up, raped and kept locked in cupboards for days on end."

Other nations cited by the group for tolerating slave labour were Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, China, Thailand, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

Last week, Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao announced his government's plan to remove two million children "from hazardous occupations" by the year 2000.

The Anti-Slavery Society, a lobbying group devoted to

ending the exploitation of child labour, estimates that between 73 and 115 million children are slave labourers in India.

Child labourers, Mr. Bravender-Coyle said, generally worked from 6 a.m. to midnight, had no regular meal breaks and were beaten for spending longer than three minutes in stench-ridden toilets.

"In most of these sweatshops children are forced to eat, sleep and work in the same stuffy, overcrowded room," Mr. Bravender-Coyle said. Doors and windows would be locked or barred to prevent escape, he said.

The Anti-Slavery Society does not immediately reveal the names of companies its investigations link to goods

made by child slave labourers, Mr. Bravender-Coyle said.

Many companies, he said, are unaware how their overseas products are manufactured, and often cancel contracts when provided with evidence of child exploitation.

Estimates from the Anti-Slavery Society in Melbourne, Australia, of the number of children in Asia and India forced into slave labour:

India — between 73 and 115 million.
Pakistan — 8 million
Nepal — 5.7 million
Philippines — 5.5 million
China — 5 million
Bangladesh — 2.8 million
Indonesia — 2.4 million
Thailand — 1.1 million
Sri Lanka — 500,000

Egyptian brokers sceptical about privatisation

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian stockbrokers have said they were treating with caution the government's latest promise to accelerate the slow-moving privatisation process.

"I'll believe it when I see it," two brokers said in unison, in response to news that the state will sell shares in 22 public-sector companies starting in October.

The privatisation programme has been in abeyance throughout the Egyptian summer after the disastrous response to the sale of shares in real estate firm Heliopolis Housing and Development. Public Sector Minister Atef Obeid, the man in charge of the programme, said that the state would adjust the system to make it more attractive to small investors.

He did not name the 22 companies slated for sale and his office did not respond to requests for more information.

"I'm sceptical just because there have been so many of these announcements in the past which have led to nothing," said the head of one prominent brokerage. He asked not to be named.

"Nobody takes any notice of these pronouncements any longer. We know of only one privatisation in the office and beyond that it's pure speculation," said another.

The second broker said he thought Mr. Obeid was trying to compensate for the impression he recently gave Western embassies that the government was not serious about privatisation.

"I understand he told them that by privatisation Egypt meant managing the public sector with a private-sector mentality. They were rather taken aback," he said. Diplomats could not immediately confirm this account of the

meeting. The programme began under the auspices of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund but the international institutions have less and less leverage over the direction of the Egyptian government's economic policy.

In two years the state has sold shares in only a fraction of the more than 300 public-sector companies. In most cases it continues to hold a majority stake.

Aladdin Saba of Hermes Financial said he welcomed Mr. Obeid's announcement that partially privatised companies would hold their annual general meetings and declare their dividends in October, several months earlier than usual.

"That's important from my point of view because it will affect prices," he told Reuters.

"It does seem they will start again and maybe they will have learnt the lesson from the Heliopolis debacle," he added.

The problem with Heliopolis was that the price was too high and the agents did not promote them hard enough, he said. The agents had applications for only 30 per cent of the offering.

Mr. Obeid said the new equity to be sold from October onwards would be in small units, 10 to 20 pounds (\$3 to \$6) a share, to encourage small investors.

All brokers said they thought plenty of money was available to buy up new stock if confidence in the market recovered.

Prices on the Egyptian stock exchange have been stagnant at 10-month lows and trading volume has been low for months.

Israel sets timetable for natural gas supplies

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel is hoping to sign a long-term natural gas supply agreement with Egypt in 1996, Israeli Energy Minister Gonen Segov has said.

"If an agreement is signed next year then supplies could start reaching Israel in 1999," Mr. Segov predicted.

Last week the Egyptian General Petroleum Corp. Agip of Italy and Amoco officially expressed readiness to sell Israel natural gas.

Energy ministry officials said that once an agreement is signed Israel will issue international tenders for the construction of a pipeline on its side of the border and will

select two companies for the distribution of gas within Israel.

The cost of the pipeline, to be completed in 1998 or 1999, and a local distribution network is put at \$500 million to \$750 million.

Israeli negotiators are currently discussing the price with the Egyptians. No final agreement has been reached but Mr. Segov believes the price will be \$2.50 per million BTU.

Israel is looking to sign a 20-year agreement with Egypt for the supply for 2.5 billion cubic metres of natural gas annually — 70 per cent will be earmarked for use by the Israel Electric Corp. and the remainder by local industry.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Astrological Foundation.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If you take it easy this morning, you will find you can get much done later today, and you can be very efficient in the days ahead.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't worry so much about a monetary affair this morning. Later today make your talents work like a charm.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You may awake feeling nervous, so do whatever will calm you down. Later today, you can be very happy at home with your loved one.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't let some worry depress you this morning. Later today visit with friends and relatives you like.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Steer clear of bigwigs today since they could be in an irate mood and get busy on personal affairs. Plan how to make more money.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Don't rely on a friend to gain some personal aim, but go after it yourself and get right results. Drive with care on the highway.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You find it difficult to get old and new ideas harmonised this morning. Late today you can plan more wisely on a new project.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Don't worry so much about something you can do little and go after personal wishes which are easy to attain.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Find better ways of advancing in the outside world and don't get miffed over some comment by an associate.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Forget that misunderstanding between a close tie and an outsider and think about matters of pleasure and have fun.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Your intuition is not working properly today, so get out with friends and enjoy amusements. Try to please your mate.

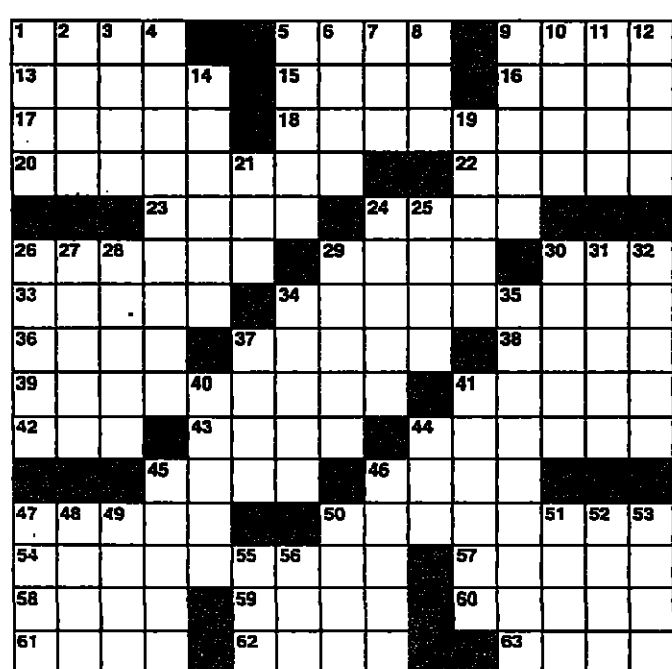
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Don't get involved in an disagreement between a family tie and an outsider. Later today get assistance elsewhere.

Birthstone of September: Sapphire — Lapis Lazuli

THE Daily Crossword by Dorothy B. Martin

ACROSS

- 1 Adjoin
- 5 Fraudulent scheme
- 9 Georgia — (Atlanta inst.)
- 13 Discharges
- 15 Nimbus
- 16 Hairdo type
- 17 To any extent
- 18 Certain vessel
- 20 Set free
- 22 "— are red..."
- 23 Sch. gps.
- 24 Busy as —
- 26 Did laundry
- 28 Stubborn one
- 30 Health resort
- 33 A musketeer
- 34 Exploded with suddenness
- 36 College official
- 37 Cupid's weapon
- 38 High
- 39 Strives
- 41 "Lovely as —"
- 42 "Rob —"
- 43 Tax
- 44 Ssesaw
- 45 Emerald Isle
- 46 Farm building
- 47 — Haute, Ind.
- 50 Musical performances
- 54 Mountain range in Italy
- 57 Alvin of ballet
- 58 Doggie treat
- 59 Solitary
- 60 "Death of a Salesman" character
- 61 Consumes
- 62 Tangle
- 63 Govt. agent



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Yesterday's puzzle solved:

HANG MOLD PARIS
ELAL ALIE ADORE
NONE TEEN LEMON
SEANCE OF THE END
NOR AURA
WAG ONGOLEMPOND
AGE LASS OSIER
KIND LAMBS ELLA
ELIAS ALTO ELK
DEERHAUNTER DYE
TURN PEN
ANS FERNHOULIE
MOTIF EIRE DENY
ATALL SCAN GATE
SABLE TESS ENOS

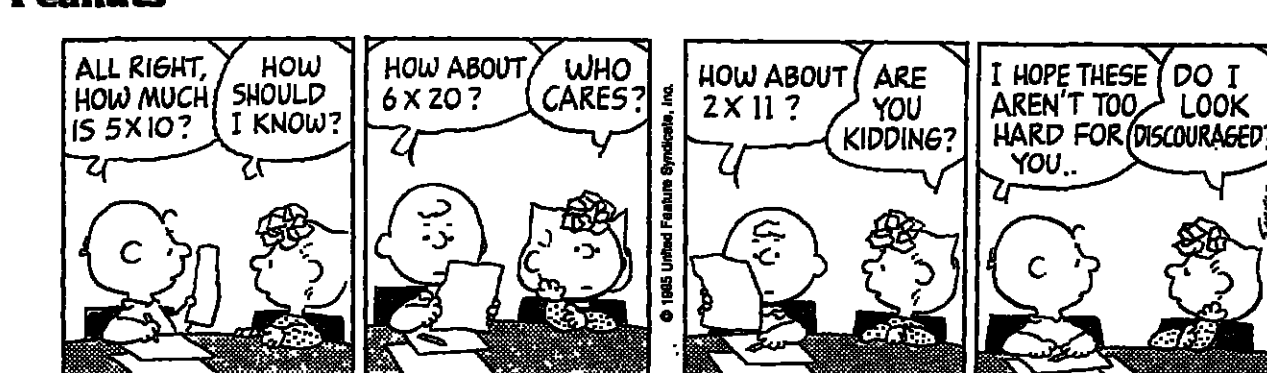
DOWN

- 1 Distant
- 2 Nibble
- 3 River to the Caspian
- 4 Bell's invention
- 5 Strongboxes
- 6 Coagulated part of milk
- 7 Exist
- 8 — tai (cocktail)
- 9 Western resort lake
- 10 Newts
- 11 Indian
- 12 — de combat
- 14 Schedules
- 15 Verdant
- 21 Unhappy
- 24 Cars
- 25 Boast
- 26 Certain bird
- 27 "— clock scholar"
- 28 Questionable
- 29 Gleeful
- 30 Move suddenly
- 31 Martinique volcano
- 32 Austrian psychologist
- 34 Herd
- 35 Mindfulness
- 37 State strongly
- 40 Foreigner
- 41 Antenna
- 44 Tic—toe
- 45 Sea eagles
- 46 Attack
- 47 Forbidden
- 48 Long heroic poem
- 49 Lacoste of tennis
- 50 Nevada city
- 51 — mator
- 52 Norman of TV
- 53 Simultaneity
- 55 Sort
- 56 Negative prefix

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



Peanuts



Andy Cap



Mutt'n'Jeff



ceptical
tion

"It does seem that... will have learned the... from the Helopolis... he added.

The problem with... high and the agents... promote them hard... said. The agents... applications for only 30... of the offering.

Mr. Obeid said... equity to be sold from... small units, 10 to 20... (\$3 to \$6) a share, to... small investors.

All brokers said... thought plenty of money... available to buy up new... confidence in the new... recovered.

Prices on the Epe... stock exchange have... stagnant at 10-month... and trading volume has... low for months.

select two companies... distribution of gas... Israel.

The cost of the proje... be completed in 1996... and a local distributor... work is put at \$500 mil... \$750 million.

Israeli negotiators... recently discussing... with the Egyptians... agreement has been... but Mr. Segal believes... price will be \$2.50 per... BTU.

Israel is looking... 10-year agreement... Egypt for the supply... billion cubic metres... of gas annually... cent will be earned... by the Israeli... and the remain... local industry.

HOROSCOPE
FORECAST FOR
DAAY, SEPTEMBER 24
1995

By Thomas S. Per... Astrologer... Astrologer

ARIES: (March 21 to... 19) If you take it... morning, you will... can get much done... day, and you can be... efficient in the day.

TAURUS: (April 20 to... 20) Don't worry so... about a monetary... morning. Later today... your talents work... charm.

GEMINI: (May 21 to... 21) You may wake... nervous, so do what... calm you down. Later... you can be very... home with your loved...

MOON CHILDREN: (22 to July 21) Don't let... worry depress you... Later today you... friends and relatives...

LEO: (July 22 to Aug... 22) Steer clear of... since they could be... mood and get busy... affairs. Plan to... make more money.

VIRGO: (August 23 to... September 22) Don't... a friend to gain some... aim, but go after it... and get right result... with care on the high...

LIBRA: (September 23 to... October 22) You find... to get old and new... harmonised. This m... Late today you can... wisely on a new project.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to... November 21) Don't... so much about something... can do little and go... personal wishes which... easy to attain.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You... better ways of advancing... the outside world and... get miffed over some... by an associate.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Forget... misunderstandings between... in an disagreement between... family tie and an outside... Later today get... somewhere.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to... February 19) You may... is not working properly... so get out with... and enjoy amusements... to please your mate.

PISCES: (February 20 to... March 20) Don't get involved... in an disagreement between... family tie and an outside... Later today get... somewhere.

Birthstone of September... Sapphire — 1 Apr. Lazuli

Business & Finance

Government readying part II of economic readjustment programme

THE PALESTINIAN National Authority will start importing Iraqi oil through Jordan as of next month, a top Palestinian official has said, adding that the supplies will be by tanks in the first stage until the Jordanian-Iraqi oil pipeline is completed. The official, (Finance) Minister Mohammad Zuhdi Nashashibi, said that talks held with the U.S. administration recently ended with a preliminary approval from the U.S. to allow the areas under the Palestinian self-rule to be supplied with Iraqi oil despite the sanctions imposed on Baghdad. Mr. Nashashibi revealed that Palestinian-Israeli talks are currently underway over supplying the Palestinian self-rule areas with Iraqi oil. However, Mr. Nashashibi stressed that the Palestinians were ready to import oil from other Arab countries which he did not identify. The official also revealed that the Palestinians are holding consultations to obtain Qatari natural gas. The Qatari government has informed the Palestinian Authority of its approval but no time has been fixed to start the project, he said (Al Rai).

A COMPLEMENTARY economic readjustment programme, to be implemented between 1995 and 1998, is currently being readied by the government which has discussed it with some international organisations. According to Planning Minister Rima Khalaf, the complementary programme will be primarily based on raising the level of the private sector to be able to take a fundamental role in the economic building process. Also to be stressed, Dr. Khalaf said, will be to raise the efficiency of the public sector to ensure providing an adequate investment climate that would encourage this sector to take on its control and supervision role at the highest standard. Dr. Khalaf pointed out that the government would concentrate its efforts during the coming four years on four areas.

REACTING TO the work suspension by the Arab Company for Manufacturing Sanitary Paper, the Ministry of Supply put the blame on the companies which have not submitted customs documents to prove higher raw materials costs. The ministry said its studies to amend price of second grade sanitary paper would be completed by the end of this month and rejected the company's work suspension as a move to pressure the ministry. The company, for its part, said the ministry was not telling the truth as the companies involved in manufacturing sanitary paper were only four and that only one of them did not provide the ministry with the required documents. The company that suspended operations manufactures the "Soft" brand (Al Rai).

THE CRIMINAL court has cleared three top former officials of the Jordan Gulf Bank of all charges raised against them by the public prosecution. The court found former Chairman Mohammad Nazzari Ammoun, former General Manager Adnan Darwazeh and Nabil Kanaan, a former senior official, not guilty of charges which were not mentioned (Al Rai).

THE CENTRAL Traffic Committee has invited all who wish to participate in establishing a public shareholding transport company to operate passenger buses' service between Jordan and Israel to apply to the traffic directorate at the Ministry of Interior. The company should have a capital no less than JD 5 million. Last date for applying is Oct. 1, 1995 (Al Rai).

Financial Markets		
in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank		
Control Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin		
Date: 23/9/1995		
Currency	Buy	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.210	0.212
British Pound	1.1163	1.1217
Deutsche Mark	0.4981	0.5006
French Franc	0.6185	0.6217
French Franc	0.1439	0.1466
Japanese Yen	0.1016	0.1021
Dutch Guilder	0.4466	0.4466
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000
Italian Lira	0.0000	0.0000
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000
Other Currencies		
Currency	Buy	Offer
Liberal Dollar	1.8810	1.8860
Liberal Lira	0.00310	0.00350



Mohammad Hourani (left) managing director of Al-Sharq Investment Projects Co. and Michael Karam, Holiday Inn's regional manager for the Middle East, signing the agreement.

AMMAN (J.T.) — On Sept. 19, 1995, the agreement for the management of a new four-star hotel to be established in Amman was signed between Holiday Inn, Worldwide and Al-Sharq Hotels and Tourism Projects Co., W.L.L., which is one of the subsidiaries of its holding company Al-Sharq Investment Projects Co. (SIP). The agreement was signed at SIP's offices by its managing director, Mr. Mohammad Hourani and Mr. Michael Karam, Holiday Inn's regional manager for the Middle East. The Amman Holiday Inn Hotel is currently at the design stage by a consortium of Jordanian architects (Jafar Tokan & Associates) and Austrian architects (Adli Lari & Associates). It consists of 206 rooms and suites, restaurants and other supporting facilities in addition to a multipurpose hall for 600 people, at an estimated cost of JD 10 million (\$14 million). The 22 donum site purchased for Amman Holiday Inn Hotel is located at Madina St. in Tla'a Ali, West Amman, and it is planned that the hotel will be operational by end 1997. The hotel represents the first place of this development project and the second phase will comprise of luxury apartments and a country club. It is worth mentioning that the hotel project has been classified by the authorities as an economically endorsed project, and accordingly it will be exempted from taxes for five years starting from the date of its operation, and all imported items and equipment will not be subjected to the import tax. The holding company Al Sharq Investment Projects Co. (SIP) is a public shareholding company with a paid up capital of JD 9 million (\$13 million) and has other investments totalling JD 1.5 million included participation in establishing Jordan Export and Financing Bank and various industrial projects and properties within Jordan.

Reuters to hold seminar on risk management

AMMAN (J.T.) — Reuters, the world news and information agency, is to hold a seminar on risk management at the InterArab Cambist Association's (ICA) annual conference in Amman this week. It will be the first time that a seminar has been included in what is the premier gathering for Arab foreign exchange dealers. The InterArab Cambist Association will hold its 21st annual conference at the InterContinental Hotel from Sept. 29 to Oct. 1. Over 300 foreign exchange dealers from leading Arab and foreign banks will attend the conference, to be held under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan. The conference is sponsored by the Jordan Investment and Finance Bank (JIF). Mr. Jamal Fariz, JIF Bank assistant general manager and ICA executive committee member, said the conference and seminar will strengthen relations between Arab dealers and their counterparts in the international markets, and will also contribute to the exchange of information on the latest financial instruments and financial market developments. Finance Minister Basil Jandaneh will address the conference on latest developments in the Jordanian economy, and the chief dealer of the Bank of England will also speak at the meeting. Jeremy Toye, Reuters manager for East Mediterranean and North Africa, said risk management is a major preoccupation for the world financial industry, and Reuters is keen to help its clients in achieving their objectives. This seminar should help provide some assistance in this goal.

VISA DAY IN JORDAN

AMMAN — VISA International, the world's credit card leader, is conducting a special "VISA Day" for the member banks of VISA in Jordan today. Up to the present day, ten Jordanian banks have joined VISA as principal, associate and participant members. VISA management believes that there is great potential for growth within the card business since VISA has a range of products which may be utilised by banks tailored to their needs and requirements. VISA products range from the premier, classic and international cards, while electron cards and smart card specifications have been standardised. The purpose of VISA Day is to allow the banks to further interact with the products, enabling them to work on enhancing their card business utilising ATM's, POS, and connecting their networks with the VISA.NET. Forty participants will attend VISA Day including senior and middle management.

Saudi banks performing better in '95

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Saudi banks made higher profits in the first half of 1995 and are expected to perform better through the year despite higher expenses and lower government spending, bankers have said. But the 12 commercial banks in the world's leading oil producer and exporter are unlikely to achieve similar results in 1995 when their net earnings hit a record 5.13 billion Saudi riyals (\$1.36 billion), the bankers said. Most of the banks which have released semi-annual results have reported higher profits for the first half of 1995 compared to the same period of 1994 due to an increase in income from interest and securities. "The banks generally performed better in the first half of 1995. You can say their net profits for the whole of the year will be slightly higher than their 1994 earnings of around 4.83 billion riyals (\$1.28 billion), Saudi banker told AFP by telephone. "The better performance is because of a rise in lending activity and a growth in interest income and earnings from investment and trading securities," he pointed out. A study by Henry Azzam, chief economist at the National Commercial Bank (NCB), showed net income of the banks increased by around 5.4 per cent in the first half of 1995 compared with the same period of 1994. The figures do not cover NCB, which does not release semi-annual results. Income from interest surged by 45.6 per cent to 5.34 billion riyals (\$1.42 billion) in the first half of 1995 from 3.66 billion riyals (\$976 million) in the first half of 1994. Earnings from investment securities rose by 6.8 per cent and those from trading securities jumped by 65.9 per cent in the same period. The banks recorded higher net profits although interest expenses soared to around 4.64 billion riyals (\$1.23 billion) from 2.85 billion riyals (\$760 million). Staff costs also rose to 1.25 billion riyals (\$332 million) from around 1.21 billion riyals (\$322 million). Seven banks which have disclosed their first-half results recorded an increase of around 13 per cent in net profits to 1.67 billion riyals

AT and T giant announces its breakup

NEW YORK (AFP) — World telecom giant AT and T has abandoned the idea that "big is beautiful" and stunned markets by announcing it will split into three companies, arguably the biggest corporate breakup in U.S. history. The new publicly-traded companies will deal with communications, communications equipment and computing respectively. "Changes in customer needs, technology and public policy are radically transforming our industry," said AT and T chairman Robert Allen, seeking to explain the reason for the move. The AT and T board, which had been considering the move since last spring, approved the breakup at a special meeting early Wednesday. Based on the company's size with annual revenues of more than \$67 billion the corporate breakup ranks as the biggest. "AT and T is reinventing itself once again," Mr. Allen held a news conference. "This restructuring of AT and T is the next logical turn in our journey since divestiture," he said, speaking of the company's 1984 breakup when the government forced it to sell some of its assets, ending its telephone monopoly and creating seven regional companies, known as the "Baby Bells." To take advantage of growth in the industry — which he put at \$3 trillion over the next decade — AT and T had to transform itself into "smaller and more focused industries," Mr. Allen said. The restructuring also comes as a result of the company's failure to combine its communications business with computing technology, according to analysts. In 1981, AT and T bought NCR Corp. for \$7.5 billion in a bid to enter the computer business, but the company's Global Information Solutions division — which ran the former NCR — has failed to generate enough revenues. The division will now shed some 8,500 jobs, about 20 per cent of its staff and stop production of personal computers. AT and T did not say how many jobs in total would be lost as a result of the reorganisation among its 303,000 employees. AT and T also announced it would be selling off its financial subsidiary, AT and T Capital Corp.

(\$445 million) from 1.47 billion riyals (\$392 million). They are Al Rajhi, Riyadh Bank, Saudi-Cairo, Saudi-British Bank, Saudi Investment Bank, Saudi-French and United Saudi Bank. Around 21.1 per cent of the profits were made by Al Rajhi while 20.9 per cent were made by Riyadh Bank. "There is more borrowing by the private and public sectors," one banker said. "This shows there is an upsurge in economic activity despite lower government expenditure. Such a development indicates the private sector is depending more on itself than on the government was the case before." By the end of the first half of 1995, bank loans to the public and private sector totalled 111.7 billion riyals (\$29.7 billion) while deposits increased by 2.1 per cent to 175.4 billion riyals (\$46.7 billion) from around 171.7 billion riyals (\$34.78 billion) at the end of 1994. Their assets also grew by 2.4 per cent to nearly 268.5 billion riyals (\$71.6 billion) from 262.1 billion riyals (\$69.8 billion). Shareholders equities, which cover the capital and provisions, have also surged over the past few years as several banks boosted capital after the government decided to put restrictions on credits to avert any bank crisis. From nearly 12.4 billion riyals (\$3.3 billion) in 1992, the capital of the country's 12 commercial banks surged to 28.9 billion riyals (\$7.2 billion) in 1993 and 33 billion riyals (\$8.8 billion) in 1994. The biggest increase came from NCB, which boosted capital from only 30 million riyals (\$8 million) to six billion riyals (\$1.6 billion).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHAMSISANI				
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607175				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 23/09/1995				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK P.C.	840	193865	228.500	231.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	2400	10730	4.480	4.480
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	6250	7563	1.200	1.210
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	900	2187	2.430	2.430
THE BOSQING BANK	200	1096	5.500	5.480
JORDAN KOWAT BANK	2055	5639	2.740	2.780
JORDAN GULF BANK	229359	245700	1.030	1.080
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	1505	8284	3.780	3.780
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	1000	3300	3.300	3.350
BUSINESS BANK	1250	4563	3.650	3.650
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	13500	50653	3.830	3.800
BEIT KHALI SAVING & INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	250	840	3.360	3.360
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2945	26526	1.920	1.930
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	1900	18827	1.550	1.580
BANKS SECTOR	301144	578401	INDEX NUMBER: 186.95	CHANGE: +1.032
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	250	670	2.700	2.680
INSURANCE SECTOR	250	670	INDEX NUMBER: 133.31	CHANGE: -0.095
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	14989	34427	1.640	1.630
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	3350	18928	5.600	5.650
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	1365	2365	2.710	2.730
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	5590	11503	2.020	2.070
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	56499	63380	1.100	1.120
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	850	1012	1.200	1.190
JORDAN PRESS & PUBLISHING / AD-DUSTOUR	1000	7500	7.600	7.500
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONSOODE HOTELS	400	936	2.300	2.350
ARAB INTEL. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	765	2568	3.330	3.100
SABRA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	4000	5300	1.340	1.330
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	16150	19320	1.200	1.170
SERVICES SECTOR	104093	156038	INDEX NUMBER: 126.89	CHANGE: +0.332
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	2840	10304	3.640	3.630
JORDAN PETROLEUM MILLS	450	1350	3.010	3.000
THE ARAB POTASH	500	2455	4.910	4.910
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	170	1606	9.470	9.450
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	1050	3360	3.200	3.200
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	1000	7350	7.350	7.350
ARAB PETROLEUM MANUFACTURING	3611	17625	4.990	4.850
SPINNING & WEAVING	240	442	1.850	1.850
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	1250	9250	7.400	7.400
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	1400	7521	5.370	5.380
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	200800	158446	1.650	1.680
ARAB CENTER FOR TRADE & TRADING	59900	78073	1.430	1.450
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	200	450	2.300	2.300
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	21600	23973	1.070	1.120
JORDAN ROCHWOOD INDUSTRIES	4000	4470	1.110	1.110
ARAB CENTER FOR TRADE & CHEMICALS	600	1275	2.130	2.120
KAMFER INVESTMENT	550	935	1.720	1.720
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	7300	23631	3.170	3.250
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	8560	17071	2.000	1.990
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	2950	4897	1.670	1.660
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	69131	100705	1.400	1.450
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY	1680	3763	2.200	2.000
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	383782	455953	INDEX NUMBER: 124.89	CHANGE: -0.232
GRAND TOTAL	789269	1191063	INDEX NUMBER: 186.32	CHANGE: +0.552
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	143400			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	133772			

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

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Russia

in group relegation promotion matches

Israel 3, Slovenia 0
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Australian motorcyclist Michael Doohan looks back at his competitors as he rides his Honda during a free practice at the Oscar Galvez circuit in Buenos Aires (Reuters photo)

Beattie records his fastest time at Argentina Grand Prix

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Australia's Daryl Beattie, needing a win to keep his fading world title hopes alive, recorded the fastest time Friday on the first day of time trial at the Argentina Grand Prix.

Beattie, in second place in the overall standings, drove his Suzuki around the 4.35-kilometre Buenos Aires race track in a time of 1 minute 45.432 seconds in the 500cc division.

Rival and fellow countryman Michael Doohan, who could clinch the world title Sunday — the penultimate race of the season — came in third with a time of 1 minute 45.614 seconds.

Beattie admitted this week that his chances of pipping Doohan at this stage of the season were slim.

"Mathematically I'm still in there with a chance," he said. "But I'll have to win the last two races of the season and probably need Mick to have a problem as well if I'm going to catch him on points," he said.

In the 250cc division, Japan's Tadayuki Okada drove his Honda to the fastest time of 1 minute 46.920 seconds.

In the 125cc division, Japan's Kazuto Sakata came in first in a time of 1 minute 51.847 seconds.

The second round of trials for all categories will take place Saturday and the Grand Prix will be run on Sunday.

Sampras, Agassi stake U.S. to 2-0 lead over Sweden

LAS VEGAS (AP) — With Andre Agassi playing at home and Pete Sampras playing at his best, the United States is on the verge of turning its Davis Cup semi-final against Sweden into a rout.

Agassi and Sampras rolled to wins Friday on an outdoor court in the shadow of the glittering Las Vegas strip to give the U.S. team a commanding 2-0 lead after the first day of the best-of-5 match competition.

Agassi beat 31-year-old Mats Wilander 7-6 (7-5), 6-2, 6-2, while Sampras needed one more set to dispose of Thomas Enqvist, 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, to move the United States within one win of the Davis Cup final three matches remaining.

"We have three great chances to put this away," Agassi said. "I like our chances of getting one of them."

Agassi, who grew up and still lives in Las Vegas, overcame some first-set jitters before a partisan, flag-waving crowd at Caesars Palace to overpower Wilander, the world's 47th-ranked player.

It was the first time the top-ranked Agassi had played competitively before the hometown fans, and it showed early as he made numerous unforced errors before rallying to take the first set in a tiebreaker.

Agassi blew a 4-0 lead while serving and tied 5-5 in the first set, then managed to break Wilander's serve to tie the set 6-6.

The turning point came, however, when Wilander's first serve of the tiebreaker split the middle and was ruled in. Agassi screamed an obscenity at the linesman and paced the court, fuming. He began hitting the ball more forcefully and won the final four points of the tiebreaker to take the set.

Unser has victory restored

DETROIT (AP) — Al Unser Jr., deprived of a victory at Portland, Oregon when his car was ruled to be in technical violation of road-clearance requirements, had the win returned to him on Friday by an IndyCar appeals panel.

The three-member panel headed by Appeals Court Judge Philip C. Elliott sided with Penske racing, which had argued that a different inspection procedure was used for its car than for others in the race.

Unser dominated the Portland race, only to have the victory set aside when the car was found to be in violation of the 5-cm clearance requirement between the bottom of the sidepods and the bottom of the car. The victory was awarded to runnerup Jimmy Vasser.

Penske racing appealed the disqualification to IndyCar stewards, who denied the appeal. Penske then carried the matter to a three-member appeals panel, which heard three days of testimony this week before issuing its decision.

Penske racing argued that its car was measured using a different procedure than that used on other cars in the race. Two of the technicians who had found the car in violation at Portland passed when recreating the process for the appeals panel. But an IndyCar crew using both measuring methods found the car to still be in violation.

The panel sided with Penske because the inspectors who cleared the Unser car during this week's hearing had used that same measuring procedure to pass every other car at Portland.

Roger Penske, who owns the team for which Unser races, said he was "pleased with the court's decision and we believe this proceeding clarified many significant issues raised as a result of the Portland race."

Kirk Russell, IndyCar's vice president of competition, said the sanctioning body was "extremely disappointed by the panel's decision but fully accept the appeals court's ruling."

The verdict had no bearing on the outcome of the driver points race, which was won by Jacques Villeneuve of Canada, with Unser finishing second.

Saudi's Mozazae wins 2nd gold, Hsu takes first for Taiwan

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Saad A. Mozazae of Saudi Arabia became the first multiple gold medalist in the 11th Asian athletic championships Friday while Hsu Pei-Chia won Taiwan's first gold medal in six years.

Mozazae earned his second gold with a victory in the men's 5,000-metres timed at 14 minutes and 1.43 seconds. M. Sopyev of Turkmenistan was second in 14:02.97 and Xia Fengyuan of China third in 14:07.99.

Mozazae won his first gold on Wednesday in the 5,000-metre steeplechase, bettering his own record to 8:24.08. Sopyev and Xia had already won one gold and one silver respectively.

Hsu, a 22-year-old Taiwanese student, took the gold in the women's 400-metre low hurdles in 56.99 seconds. The silver went to Thai Reawadee Watanasin at 57.98 and Natalia Torchina of Kazakhstan with 58.88.

"I was tired after fighting the winds and hurdles, but in the last 100-metre, in my mind then was only to do best for the gold," said Hsu, who was collapsed after entering the finish line.

"I feel so happy to present the first gold in six years for my country," added Hsu, who won silver in Asian Games in Hiroshima. "Finally, a hard training and long dream come true," added her trainer Dai Yun Lin.

It was the first gold medal for Taiwan in an international meet since 1989 when Taiwanese athletes won golds in men's long jump and decathlon events.

The former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan and China — which continues to dominate the five-day event — each captured two of eight golds at stake on the third day of competition.

The first gold for Kazakhstan was won by Svetlana Kazanina, who outpointed opponents in the grueling women's heptathlon with 5,728 points after winning the 800-metre run in two minutes and 19.34 seconds. Its second came in the women's long jump when Elena Pershina reached 6.50 metres.

Chinese walker Feng Haixia won the day's first gold for China in the 10-kilometre walk, setting a new meet record of 45:58.16, breaking compatriot Gao Hingmiao's 47:08.97 set in 1993.

Also surpassing the old record were silver medalist Wang Liping, also of China, bronze medalist Yuka Kamikawa of Japan and Maria Sozonova of Kazakhstan.

China's second gold was won by Li Lei in the women's javelin throw with a toss of 60.48 metres. South Korean Lee Young-Sum claimed the silver and the bronze went to China's Ha Xiaoyan.

The other gold winners of the day were South Korean Lee Jin-Taek, who won the men's high jump at 2.32 metres, and Qatar's Mubarak Al Nubi, who won the men's 400-metre hurdles in 50.17 seconds.

"I feel very happy because I have promised my mother to come back with a medal," said Mubarak, whose twin brother Abdul Rahman won a bronze Thursday in men's long jump.

The 26-year-old Qatari said his next aim is to win the world champion next year in Sydney.

Lee jumped to a new championship record, breaking the mark set by China's Zhu Jianhua in Kuwait 12 years ago.

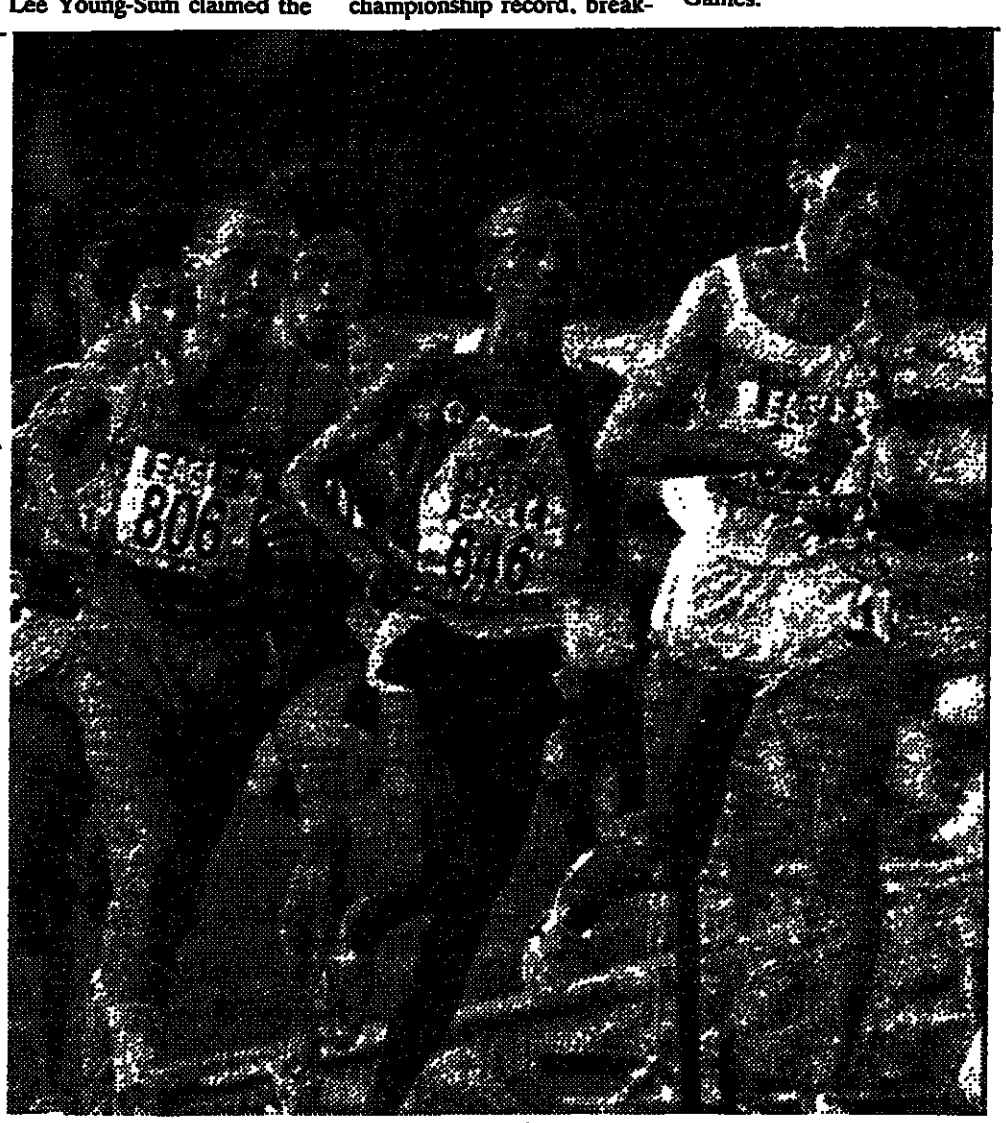
China now leads with 10 golds, five silvers and three bronzes after the third day of the championships, which run until Sunday at Jakarta's Madya Stadium.

Asia's traditional sports powers, despite challenges from six former Soviet republics — Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — are expected to dominate at the event, which features more than 700 athletes from 37 countries.

China won 22 gold and 18 silver medals in track and field at last year's Asian Games.



Kazakhstan's Elena Pershina grimaces as she jumps to winning the women's long jump final with a distance of 6.50 metres (Reuters photo)



Saudi Arabian runner Saad Mozazae in the 11th Asian athletic championships (right) leads the men's 5,000 metres final in Senayan stadium (Reuters photo)

Sri Lanka win double gold at Jakarta athletics

JAKARTA (APF) — Sri Lanka struck double gold here on Saturday in the women's 200-metres and the 100-metres hurdles in the 11th Asian Athletic Championships, while China maintained their overall dominance with 11 golds.

Sri Lanka's 19-year-old Soshanthika Jayasinghe won the women's 200-metres in 23 seconds dead, breaking the 1993 championship record of 23:24 set by China's Chen Zhanjing.

Jayasinghe, who won silver in Friday's 100-metres, said she felt much fitter for the 200 than the 100, when she "ran out of energy in the last 30 metres."

Sri Lanka's other gold was won the Shriyani Kulawanse in the 100 metres hurdles. She finished in 13:29, despite suffering the effects of flu and a throat infection, which landed her in a Jakarta hospital a few days ago.

"This is my most memorable career win, since I'm ill," Kulawansa said.

Azziz Matter earned Bahrain its first gold medal in the 200 metres in 20:76.

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Storm over single currency blows EU summit off course

ALCUDIA, Spain (AFP) — European Union (EU) leaders ended their informal summit Saturday caught in a storm over a future single currency having made little progress towards their long-term goals of a single currency and closer political union.

British Prime Minister John Major sailed into the currency debate by asking if monetary union by the turn of the century was politically or economically feasible.

Mr. Major said he would be "absolutely dumb-founded" if a first wave of countries moving to a single currency by a deadline of 1999 involved a majority of EU states.

"The realities of what it means and what it could do to the political and economic structure of the EU have not been examined," he warned.

"The concept of 15, 19 or 25 countries moving ahead at the same pace, the same time and with the same objectives is not politically or economically credible," he added, referring to possible EU expansion.

The summit was taken over by the currency row after German Finance Minister Theo Waigel said Italy had no chance of joining the first wave of states, but German Chancellor Helmut Kohl appeared on Italian television to say: "Germany does not want to exclude anybody."

German Foreign Minister

Klaus Kinkel also tried to defuse the row, saying: "The achievement of economic and monetary union through creation of a single European currency is still the top agenda item in European policy until the end of the century."

Mr. Waigel's remarks touched a sensitive part of the EU anatomy by highlighting Germany's enormous economic influence and therefore its ability to dictate the terms of monetary union.

According to officials, Mr. Kohl told EU leaders Germany did not want to tighten requirements for participation in a single currency, but underlined there was a huge political risk of the German public or parliament refusing to give up the mark.

The only way to avoid that was to stick to the Maastricht Treaty conditions, thus ensuring the new European currency is at least as strong as the mark, Mr. Kohl said.

Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez said there could be no retreat from the Maastricht timetable. "We cannot give up the objective of deciding which countries will participate in 1998 at the latest," he added.

Mr. Gonzalez failed to facilitate a frank exchange of views on the EU's basic direction as it prepares for momentous changes, including single currency and enlargement to a bloc of 25 or more, over the next decade.

He planned a meeting with

only interpreters in the room but French President Jacques Chirac insisted on having a notetaker behind him. The result, according to a diplomat, was discussion largely over established ground.

"Once it was going on the record, there was no chance of any progress being made. ... What we got was simply national positions being regurgitated again," the source added.

So while the summit once again exposed contradictions within the EU between those like Germany and the Benelux states who want closer political ties and those, led by Britain, which believe the process has gone far enough, it did not do much to bridge the gaps.

Mr. Major said he was "relaxed" about when an inter-governmental conference on a review of Maastricht due in spring would be wrapped up, signalling he would not allow a looming deadline to pressure Britain into concessions.

Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene said that without further political integration, enlargement would signal the end of the EU in its current form.

Meanwhile, Mr. Chirac said he held talks with Mr. Kohl early on Saturday when they reached "complete agreement" on all nine items on their agenda.

"The vision I have of the Europe of tomorrow seems

to me for a large part to be shared by all of our partners," he added. "Today most European Union members are talking along the same lines."

Although a planned boat trip of EU leaders was scrapped after a flotilla of vessels gathered to protest French nuclear tests in the South Pacific, he said other EU countries had supported his stance.

"I was very happy with the support I received from certain of my colleagues, notably those among the oldest in our group," he added.

Mr. Chirac also said that, on the question of Paris wanting to maintain frontier checks for an extra six months despite the Schengen accords on opening borders, "everyone understands that, given problems linked to terrorism and developments in drug trafficking, there are precautions which have to be taken which cannot be avoided."

Meanwhile, EU leaders said they did not want to do anything in Bosnia or on EU expansion which could harm relations with Russia, traditionally an ally of the Serbs.

Mr. Chirac said they agreed over a U.S.-led plan for the region to split Bosnia in two and enforce a peace through NATO soldiers. However, there would also be room for Russian troops and those from Muslim countries alongside.



TENSION IN HEBRON: An Israeli soldier fends himself from Palestinian youths who are demanding the release of friends who were arrested during a day of protests in the occupied West Bank town of Hebron on Friday (see page one) (AFP photo)

Egyptian militant leader goes missing in Croatia

CAIRO (Agencies) — A leading Islamic militant, wanted in Egypt on charges of attempting to overthrow the government, has disappeared on a trip to Croatia, Al Hayat newspaper reported Saturday.

Egypt has long sought to get Talaat Qasem, 38, returned from Europe for trial, and his wife and supporters suggested Egypt — or the United States — could have been behind his disappearance.

Mr. Qasem was found guilty and sentenced to death in absentia in a 1992 trial that grouped militants who allegedly received training in Pakistan or Afghanistan. He would have to be retried if captured.

He has been living in recent years in Denmark, where he had political asylum.

His disappearance came to light after a fundamentalist group known as Islamic League of the Followers of the Book and Sunna issued a statement in London threatening revenge if Croatia does not make clear what happened to Mr. Qasem. The group suggested Egypt or the United States could have been behind his disappearance.

Last January, under President Bill Clinton's anti-terrorism initiative, Mr. Qasem's name was put on a list of people to whom transfer of funds are to be blocked. The initiative also froze the U.S. assets of groups the

U.S. deemed used terrorism to subvert peace activities.

At Mr. Qasem's request, Egyptian lawyer Abdul Halim Mandour filed a suit in Cairo to try to block Mr. Clinton's action.

Contacted Saturday, Mr. Mandour said he had not been in contact with Mr. Qasem in recent weeks and was not aware of reports of his disappearance.

The London-based Al Hayat said that Mr. Qasem's wife, Amani Farouk, said she holds Croatia "responsible for the disappearance" of her husband. She appealed to international human rights groups to intervene, saying her husband was "wanted" by political enemies.

She lives in Denmark with the couple's five children and is pregnant with a sixth child, the paper said.

According to her account to Al Hayat, Mr. Qasem intended to travel to Bosnia to write a book about the war. She said he was granted a visa on Sept. 11 and left the following day to Croatia.

After arriving in the capital Zagreb, he was staying at the house of a friend when Croatian police broke in and arrested them.

The friend and Mr. Qasem's translator were freed Sept. 15, she told Al Hayat.

Croatia's Foreign Ministry says that Mr. Qasem was accused of violating residence laws, was tried and convicted, paid a fine and was

ordered to leave with 24 hours. The ministry says he left Croatia Sept. 18 to an "unknown destination," Ms. Farouk said.

Mr. Qasem is one of the founders of Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah, which has been blamed for much of the violence in a three-year campaign by Muslim militants to try to overthrow Egypt's secular government and replace it with strict Islamic rule.

A graduate in engineering from Minya University in southern Egypt, Mr. Qasem has been accused of being a spokesman for the group abroad.

Mr. Qasem was first jailed in 1981, when then-President Anwar Sadat ordered that hundreds of suspected political foes and Islamic fundamentalists be detained. After he was released in the mid-1980s, he reportedly went to Saudi Arabia and then Pakistan, Egyptian security officials say.

The officials accuse him of directing the Gamaa's activities from abroad, including acting as its overseas spokesman. They say that in recent months he visited Sudan to meet with Sheikh Hassan Tourabi, whom the Egyptians accuse of harbouring Egypt's Islamic foes.

Al Hayat quoted a statement from the Islamic League of the Followers of the Book and Sunna, reacting to the disappearance of Mr. Qasem.

Abdul Rahman trial goes to jury in New York court

NEW YORK (Agencies) — The case against 10 people accused of plotting a bloody campaign of attacks on New York landmarks was to go to the jury Saturday as the nine-month trial neared an end.

The lawyers for Egyptian cleric Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and nine others closed their arguments Friday, accusing the government of being hasty and sloppy in its investigation.

Federal Judge Michael Mukasey gave deliberation instructions to the jurors who were to be sequestered to avoid outside influence or distraction.

Concluding closing arguments, Prosecutor Andrew McCarthy acknowledged Thursday that it was difficult to find untainted informants to testify.

He told jurors that he wished the government could have used "pillars of the community" to testify in the case instead of a paid informant who has admitted to lying.

But he said such upstanding citizens "don't get invited to kitchen conversations about mass murder and they don't build bombs in dark garages."

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, a 57-year-old blind cleric who heads a fundamentalist Islamic movement, is on trial with nine others on charges of plotting to blow up major New York sites such as the World Trade Centre and United Nations headquarters.

The attacks were also allegedly to include the busy Lincoln and Holland tunnels which cross under the Hudson River to the island of

Manhattan as well as George Washington Bridge.

The prosecution has charged that the attacks — which were to be carried out in a single day in 1993 — were an effort to pressure Washington on Middle East policy.

Four men allegedly linked to the sheikh were sentenced to life in jail in connection with the Feb. 26, 1993 World Trade Centre bombing, which killed six people and injured more than 1,000.

None of the defendants has been charged with that attack, but prosecutors argued that it was part of their terrorist campaign.

The government is seeking a conspiracy conviction using rarely used law passed during the civil war and is thus not required to show that the defendants committed acts of terrorism, but engaged in a seditious conspiracy.

Lynne Stewart, Sheikh Abdul Rahman's chief lawyer, has described the cleric "as a man of God" who was merely exercising his right to free speech as a religious leader.

The defence team also sought to discredit the principal prosecution witness, Emad Ahmad Salem, an informant that defence attorneys contend set a trap for their clients.

The jury was not expected to begin sifting through hundreds of exhibits and recalling the testimony of more than 200 witnesses until later in the day, after hearing Judge Mukasey read his 200-page legal road map.

The 1990 assassination of

Rabbi Meir Kahane and a plot to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak are also part of what prosecutors called a war of urban terrorism by militants in the United States.

On Friday, tempers rose among lawyers as they bickered about each other's tactics.

One defence lawyer, Valerie Amsterdam, asked for a mistrial late Thursday and again Friday because she thought she was singled out by prosecutors.

Defence lawyers portrayed the government as hasty and sloppy in its investigation that produced videotapes, audiotapes and photographs of defendants allegedly conspiring.

Prosecutors said the defence was distorting the evidence in an attempt to blur the facts to a jury that has watched the case develop over the last nine months.

Ms. Amsterdam, who represents defendant Fares Khalafalla, said she took it personally when Mr. McCarthy called her a liar during summations Thursday.

She accused Mr. McCarthy of singling her out because she questioned evidence that he handled during the investigative phase of the case.

"I believe Mr. McCarthy's involvement in the investigation of this case and his concern about his personal conduct in the investigation of the case led to the emphatic personal, violent attack that I incurred yesterday, including a five-hour rebuttal out of an eight-hour rebuttal aimed only at my client and me."

COLUMN

Russian TV takes outspoken programme off the air

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's main television channel dropped a hard-punching news magazine programme in a move its anchorman said was aimed at stemming criticism of the government ahead of December election. "They have decided to close the programme because they are trying to set up a 'ministry of truth'," Sergei Dorenko, who introduces Versii (Versions), charged.

A spokesman for public Russian Television (ORT) which has aired Versii for six months denied that the decision to close it from October was politically motivated.

Spokesman Anatoly Sosnovsky told Reuters Versii was too expensive, adding:

"Dorenko does not want to make political programmes. The late-night Versii, which tackles the country's hottest issues, has been particularly critical of policy on Chechnya where Russian troops have fought a bitter war with separatists. Mr. Dorenko retorted: 'We have told them we are ready to finance the production ourselves. I told them 'you can have it for one ruble,' he said. 'The motives behind their decision are purely political. They do not want to see (human rights activists) Sergei Kovalyov, they do not want to see demorats,' Mr. Dorenko told Reuters.

Hold your nose, here comes man who doesn't bathe

LONDON (AP) — It may sound like a dirty way to do business, but Trevor Newton wants his customers to know that he doesn't bathe. And, although a lot of them are pretty hot under the collar, the chief executive of Yorkshire Water PLC wants them to shun the shower and tub as well.

Yorkshire Water is running out of water because of a drought in northern England, and Mr. Newton is threatening to cut off supplies every other day if the reservoirs don't start filling up soon. "I personally haven't had a bath or shower for three months," the executive disclosed this week. Mr. Newton said he keeps his hygiene up to snuff by using a washcloth and half a bowl of hot water every day. "He's trying to lead the way and say, 'you can save water. It can be done,'" Yorkshire Water spokesman John Howe said. With some reservoirs down to 13.8 per cent of their regular water supply, the company asked for government permission to cut off the water supply for all homes and businesses in the affected areas. Everybody would get 24 hours of water followed by 24 hours of no water. About 160,000 water customers, or 384,000 people, would endure the cutoffs.

Tutu urges easier abortion rules

KIMBERLEY, South Africa (AP) — Archbishop of Cape Town Desmond Tutu urged the Anglican Church to support legal changes making abortion easier for women in South Africa. "I would hope that the woman seeking an abortion would receive counselling, for it is not just a personal and individual matter," Arch. Tutu said. "The fetus is not a tooth," Arch. Tutu spoke at the opening of a provincial synod in this diamond-mining city that is debate abortion, a burning topic as South Africa changes apartheid-era laws.

Kabul says Taliban night attacks foiled

KABUL (Agencies) — The Taliban Islamic movement launched night attacks against troops loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani based southwest of Kabul but were repulsed with no territorial gain, an official spokesman said Saturday.

Mullah Abdul Qayum, alias Mullah Mishr, the Taliban military commander of Maidan Shahr, has pledged to capture Kabul by force if Mr. Rabbani and his topgun, former Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masood, do not surrender.

Observers say the Taliban may figure it would be easier to capture Kabul via Kalandar rather than making a frontal assault up the main national highway from Maidan Shahr, where they face not only minefields but pro-Rabbani defenders in well-fortified positions backed by artillery and tanks.

Abdullah said the Taliban on Friday made use of a tactic called "shabkhun" — literally "night-blood" — a kind of night ambush without artillery backing in which the attackers crawl on their stomach to within striking distance of the enemy.

Meanwhile, in fresh fighting in northern Afghanistan, Abdullah said fighters loyal to Mr. Masood had captured some more territory from their Uzbek rival, ex-communist General Abdul Rashid Dostum, around Sangcharak district of Jawzjan province.

He said in one or two days he expected two previously separate Mujahideen fronts in Jawzjan and Balkh provinces to be able to link their forces.

(Continued on page 7)

Algerian opposition leader to run in polls

ALGIERS (AFP) — A leading member of a group calling for a boycott of the presidential election in Algeria later this year said Saturday that he would be a candidate in it to "interrupt the government's proceedings."

The newly-declared candidate is Ahmad Ben Mohamed, president of the Democratic Muslim Jazair Party (JMC), one of the political parties making up the Rome group which has called for a boycott of the election.

Together with six other groups and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which is banned in Algeria, the JMC signed in Rome in January a "national contract."

Last month the Rome group said it would not put forward candidates and called on Algerians not to provide potential candidates with the signatures they need.

Candidates need at least 75,000 signatures, collected in 25 of Algeria's 48 administrative districts to be eligible. They have until Oct. 2 to gather them.

Mr. Ben Mohamed, calling for an "active boycott" of the election, said in a statement made public Saturday that he would stand in the presidential contest, the first round of which is due to be

held on Nov. 16, "without entertaining the slightest illusion as to its outcome."

He said the elections would "legitimise the government" and said it was necessary "actively to boycott the elections by taking part in them and not look on from a distance."

The boycotting parties, which include not only the FIS but the National Liberation Front (FLN), formerly the only party, and the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) want a political agreement before any election.

Mr. Ben Mohamed said his candidacy "in no way" called into question his party's undertakings in respect of other Rome group members.

Interior Minister Mostefa Ben Mansour said that 36 candidates, among them outgoing President Liamine Zeroual, have indicated their intention of standing.

He said that the continuing attacks in Algeria attributed to the Armed Islamic Groups (GIA) would not prevent the election taking place.

It was also announced in Algiers that Algerian citizens living in France will be able to cast their ballots at consulates in France from Nov. 11 to 16.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Parliament session deferred by 2 months

AMMAN (I.T.) — A Royal Decree was issued Saturday postponing the regular session of the Lower House of Parliament for two months. The regular session is normally opened by His Majesty King Hussein by October 1 but the King is authorised by the Constitution to postpone the session for a maximum of two months. Observers believe that the postponement of the regular session was due to the government's pre-occupation with preparations for the Middle East and North Africa economic conference, which opens on Oct. 29.

Turk police catch Ocalan's brother

ANKARA (R) — Turkish police detained on Saturday the brother of the chief of the rebel Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) while trying illegally to leave western Turkey for Greece, a police spokeswoman said. "He was trying to leave the country illegally — he had no passport and no visa — the PKK militants were trying to smuggle him out," the spokeswoman in the western port town of Izmir told Reuters by telephone. She said Mehmet Ocalan, two PKK guerrillas and his six children, were caught trying to board a privately-hired boat for Greece early on Saturday. Mr. Ocalan, brother of PKK leader Abdullah "Apo" Ocalan, was then detained and would appear in court in Izmir at a later date to explain his illegal exit attempt, she said. The spokeswoman said Mehmet Ocalan was not a guerrilla, but had links with the PKK.

Babylon Arts Festival opens

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The annual Babylon Arts Festival has opened with defiance of the United States and condemnation of the five-year-old U.N. embargo on Iraq. "This gathering of over 30 countries from the four corners of the earth is the best example of the survival of the good," said Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan on Friday night. He blamed the "vicious" embargo on "the forces of aggression, in the forefront of which comes Washington." The festival in the historic city of Babylon, 160 kilometres south of Baghdad, is to run until Oct. 6. Around 50 teams from several countries, including Japan and France, are to take part.

Two Libyan officials visit Mogadishu

MOGADISHU (AFP) — A two-member Libyan delegation has been visiting Mogadishu for the past two days, and has had talks with several senior aides of warlord Mohammed Farah Aided, reliable sources here said Saturday. The purpose of their visit was not immediately clear, but General Aided's rivals said the Libyans were here to assess economic and military needs of Gen. Aided's self-declared "government" with a view to providing aid. Gen. Aided's supporters declared him "interior president" in June after which he announced the formation of a "government." His opponents refused to recognise his administration. The Libyan officials, whose names were not given, on Friday had talks with Gen. Aided's "interior minister" Mohammed Qanyare Afrah and were later Saturday expected to meet the warlord in the central town of Baidoa before leaving the country. Another three-member Libyan delegation visited Mogadishu in July and had talks with Gen. Aided.

Police kill suspect in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Police on Saturday shot dead a suspected extremist wanted in connection with the murder of two women and a man last year. Police were attempting to arrest Fathi Abdul Qader Al Zeidy near the town of Ismailiya on the Suez Canal, but he refused to surrender and opened fire, security officials said. They said he was killed when police returned fire. The officials said Zeidy participated in anti-government activities with Muslim radicals and also engaged in crime. He was sentenced to death in absentia in 1994 for killing two women and a man during a robbery, the officials said.

Policeman who fired at Israelis was 'drunk'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Palestinian police informed Israel on Saturday that one of its men was drunk when he fired at Israeli troops just outside the West Bank self-rule enclave of Jericho, the army said. Military officials said the policeman approached a checkpoint and fired at a group of soldiers for no apparent reason, without hitting anybody. Israel has lodged a protest with the Palestinian self-rule authority over the incident which took place on Friday. There was no indication if the policeman was disciplined.